



PLUS: DEMON · HERO HOTLINE
SPEEDY · WILD DOG · SUPERMAN

ACTION

COMICS® WEEKLY

NO. 639

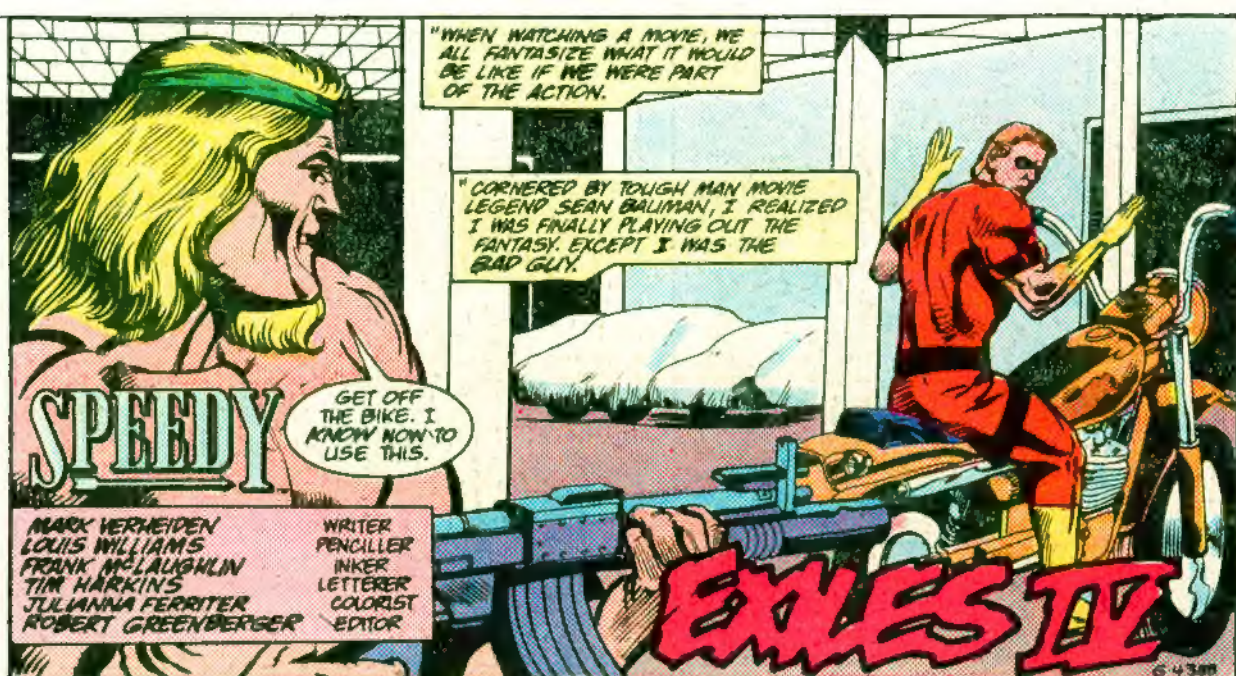
\$1.50

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U.K. 60p

PHANTOM
LADY™





"WHEN WATCHING A MOVIE, WE ALL FANTASIZE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE IF WE WERE PART OF THE ACTION."

"CORNERED BY TOUGH MAN MOVIE LEGEND SEAN BALIMAN, I REALIZED I WAS FINALLY PLAYING OUT THE FANTASY. EXCEPT I WAS THE BAD GUY."

GET OFF THE BIKE. I KNOW HOW TO USE THIS.

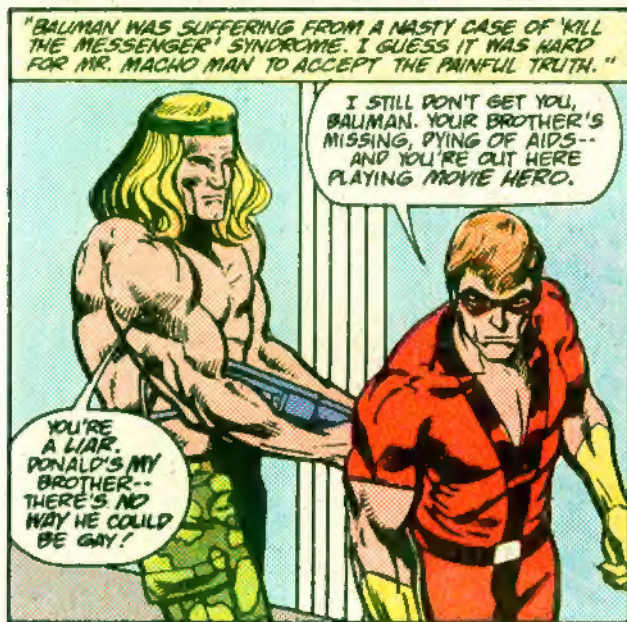
SPEEDY

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EXILES IV

64389



"BALIMAN WAS SUFFERING FROM A NASTY CASE OF 'KILL THE MESSENGER' SYNDROME. I GUESS IT WAS HARD FOR MR. MACHO MAN TO ACCEPT THE PAINFUL TRUTH."

I STILL DON'T GET YOU, BALIMAN. YOUR BROTHER'S MISSING, DYING OF AIDS-- AND YOU'RE OUT HERE PLAYING MOVIE HERO.

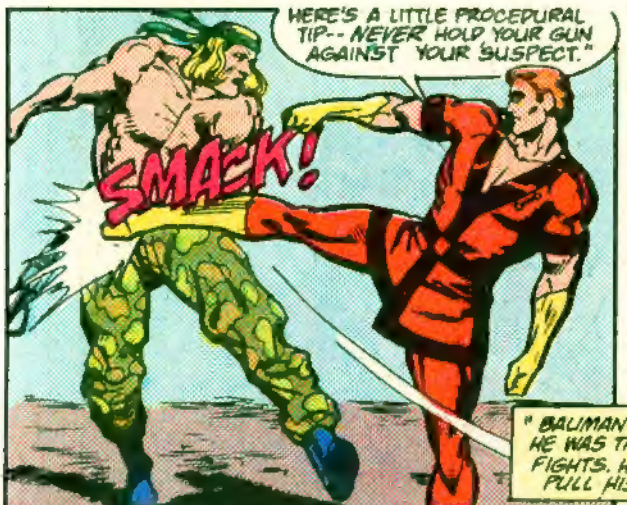
YOU'RE A LIAR. DONALD'S MY BROTHER-- THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD BE GAY!



"SO, WHILE I FELT SORRY FOR HIM, I WAS GETTING SICK AND TIRED OF HIS IRRATIONAL, HOMOPHOBIC PREJUDICES-- NOT TO MENTION HIS POINTY LITTLE GUN."

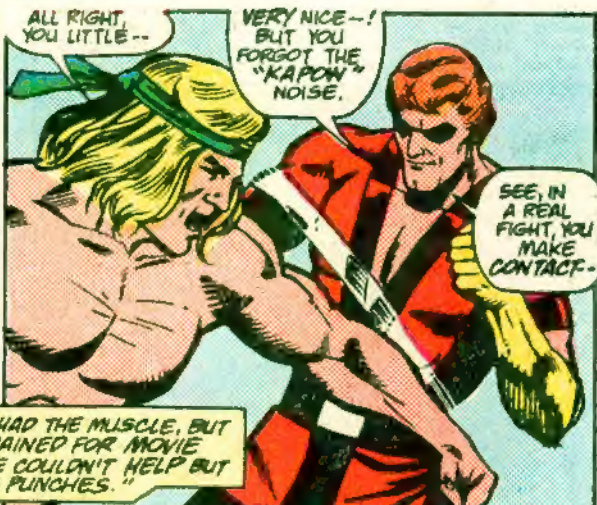
HURRY UP-- MOVE IT!

THAT'S IT.



HERE'S A LITTLE PROCEDURAL TIP-- NEVER HOLD YOUR GUN AGAINST YOUR SUSPECT."

SMAEK!

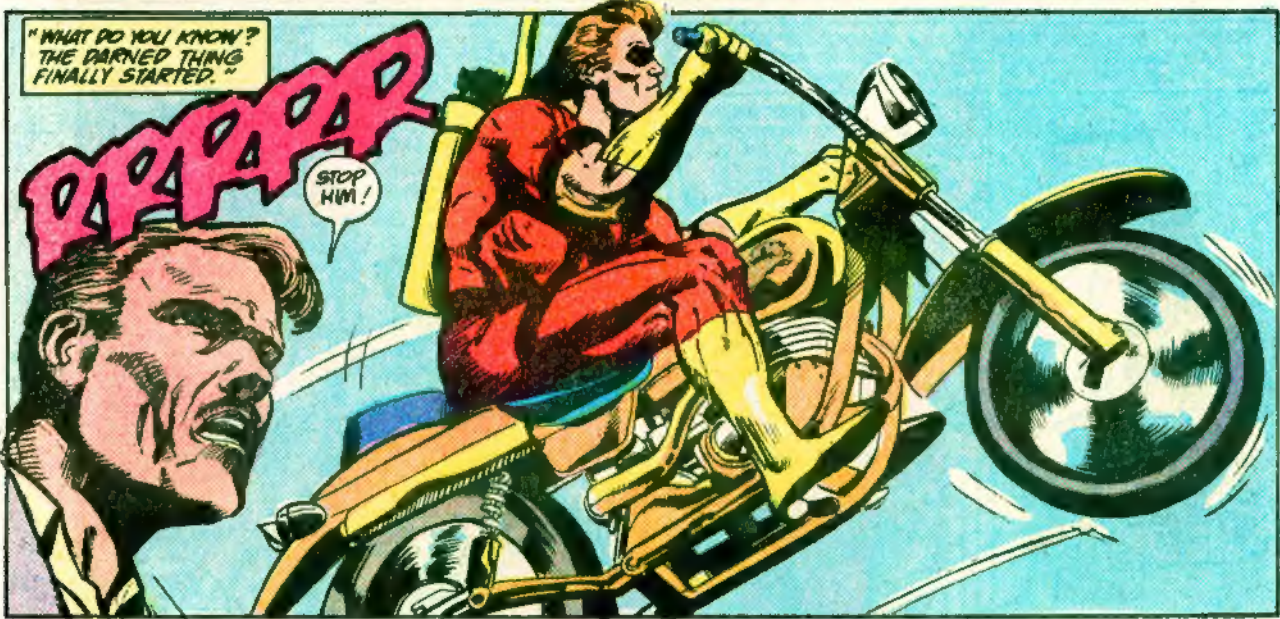
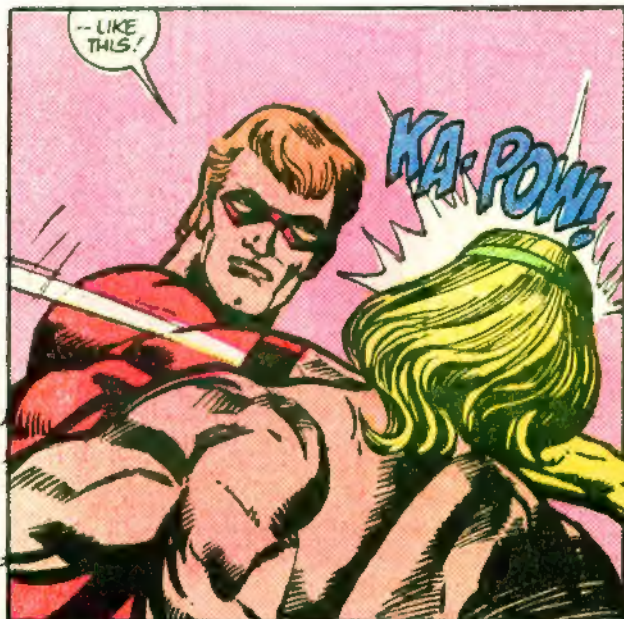


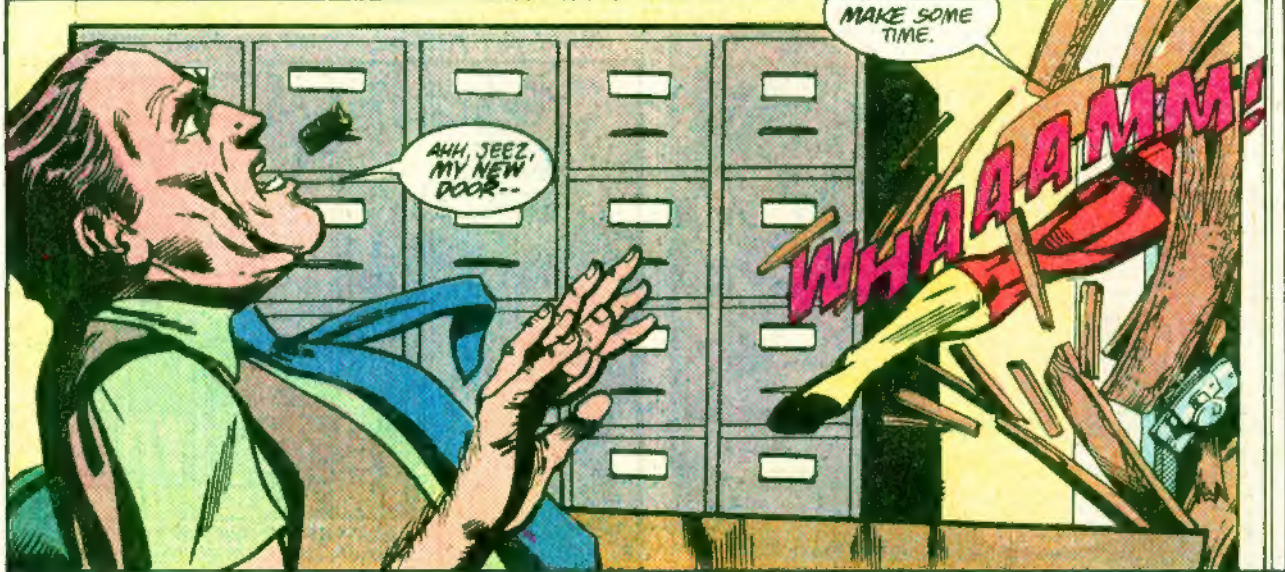
ALL RIGHT, YOU LITTLE--

VERY NICE--! BUT YOU FORGOT THE "KAPOW" NOISE.

SEE, IN A REAL FIGHT, YOU MAKE CONTACT--

"BALIMAN HAD THE MUSCLE, BUT HE WAS TRAINED FOR MOVIE FIGHTS. HE COULDN'T HELP BUT PULL HIS PUNCHES."





AHH, JEEZ,
MY NEW
DOOR--

MAKE SOME
TIME.

WHAAAMM!



WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SEAN
BAUMAN WAS DONALD LOSSNER'S
BROTHER?

WPK--
WHAT--
DIFFERENCE--
DOES--IT--
MAKE---
?



BAUMAN TOOK IT KIND OF
PERSONAL WHEN I TOLD HIM
HIS LITTLE BROTHER WAS GAY
AND SUFFERING FROM AIDS. HE
THINKS I'M TRYING TO
WRECK HIS CAREER!

KOFK--
JEEZ, KID,
YOU'RE IN
CALIFORNIA--
MELLOW OUT
A LITTLE--

I DIDN'T TELL
YOU BECAUSE I
DIDN'T THINK IT
MATTERED? AND
BAUMAN'S PEOPLE
WANTED THINGS
KEPT VERY
QUIET.



WHAT CAN I TELL YOU?
BAUMAN'S A MOVIE STAR--
HE PLAYS BY DIFFERENT
RULES.

YEAH? WELL, GAME OVER.
I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO FIND
BROTHER DONALD-- AND I
DON'T THINK BAUMAN
REALLY WANTS HIM
FOUND?



I THOUGHT I WAS TOUGH,
BUT I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING,
BURLEY-- SOMETIMES THE
WORLD SUCKS!

VERY POETIC,
KID. DON'T SLAM
WHAT'S LEFT OF
THE DOOR ON
YOUR WAY OUT.

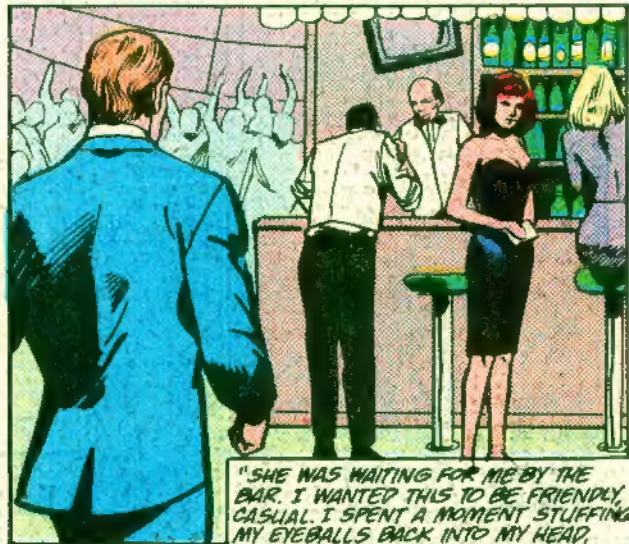
"WELL, THAT WASN'T VERY BRIGHT. LOOK UP SLEAZY IN THE DICTIONARY AND YOU'D FIND BURLEY'S PICTURE, BUT JOE WISE HE WAS THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN."

YOU'RE VERY HANDSOME TONIGHT, MR. HARPER.

THANKS. I'VE, UHH, HAVE A DATE THIS EVENING. I HOPE IT ISN'T A PROBLEM, WATCHING LIAN LIKE THIS--

NO PROBLEM AT ALL. LIAN IS A LITTLE ANGEL.

"LIANA PICKED THE SPOT, A HOLLYWOOD HIP-HOP JOINT CALLED 'THE CIRCLE RED.' I FELT A LITTLE OUT OF PLACE, BUT THEN CALIFORNIA DOES THAT TO YOU."

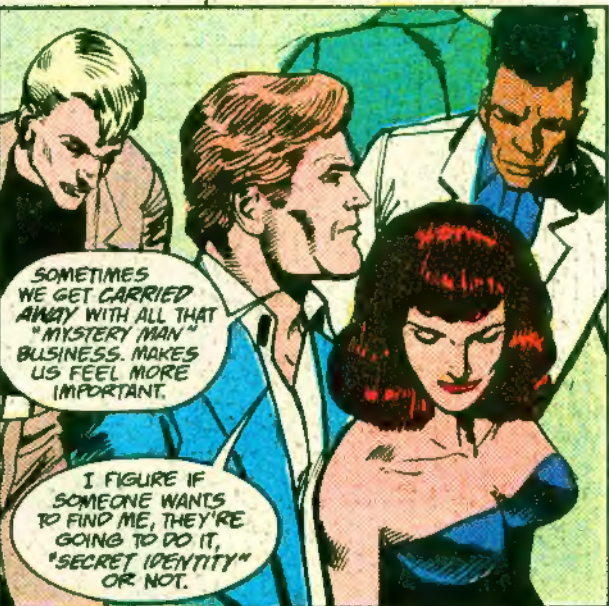


"SHE WAS WAITING FOR ME BY THE BAR. I WANTED THIS TO BE FRIENDLY, CASUAL. I SPENT A MOMENT STUFFING MY EYEBALLS BACK INTO MY HEAD, THEN SAUNTERED OVER. CASUALLY."

I'M GLAD YOU WERE FREE.

ME TOO. THAT COSTUME DOESN'T DO YOU JUSTICE.

I'M A LITTLE SURPRISED, THOUGH. I THOUGHT SECRET IDENTITIES WERE IMPORTANT TO YOU HEROIC TYPES.



SOMETIMES WE GET CARRIED AWAY WITH ALL THAT "MYSTERY MAN" BUSINESS. MAKES US FEEL MORE IMPORTANT.

I FIGURE IF SOMEONE WANTS TO FIND ME, THEY'RE GOING TO DO IT, "SECRET IDENTITY" OR NOT.

I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO ASK BACK AT THE, UH, CRIME SCENE. WHAT DO YOU DO?

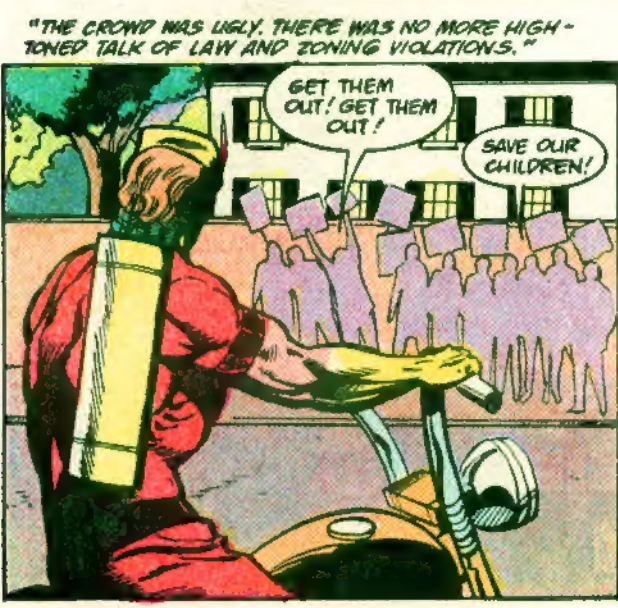
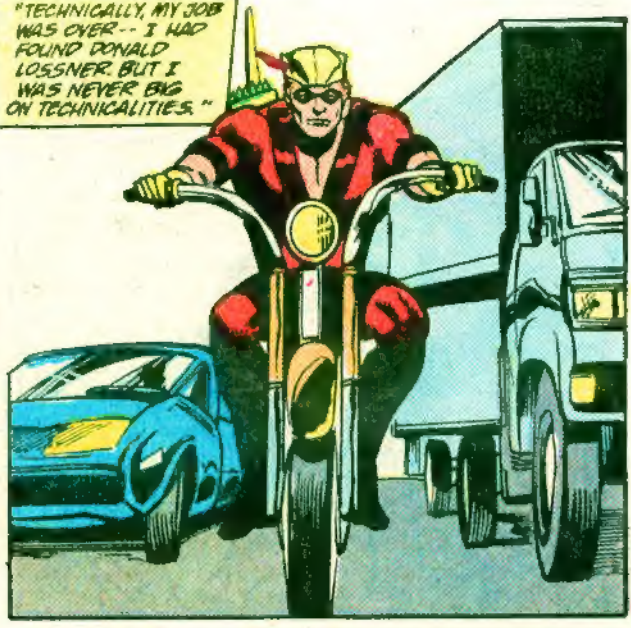
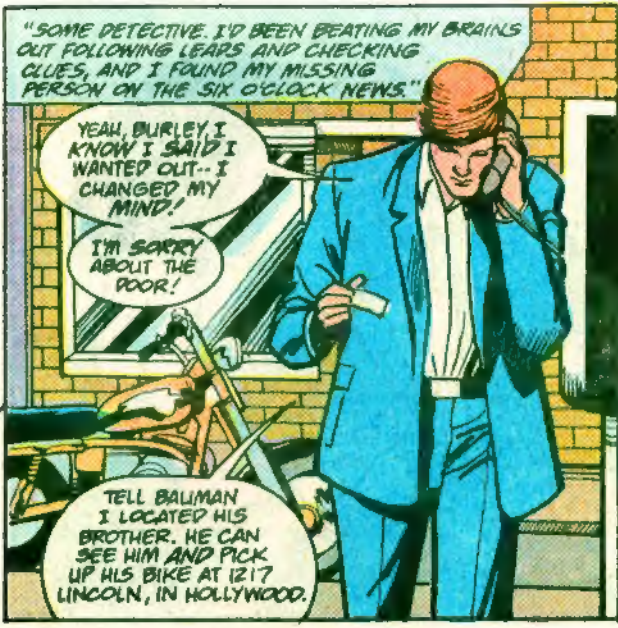
I'M A LEGAL SECRETARY DOWNTOWN. IT'S NOT VERY INTERESTING, BUT THE PAY IS GOOD.

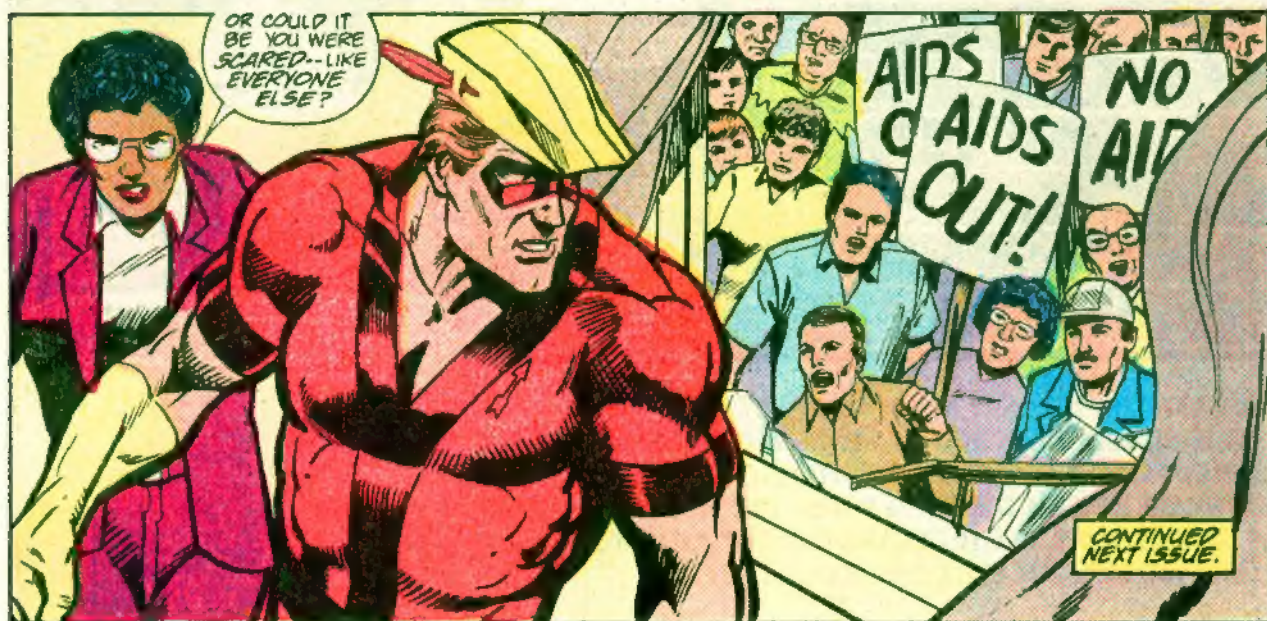
HOW ABOUT YOU? PUNCHING PURSE SNATCHES CAN'T BE ALL THAT LUCRATIVE.



AT THE MOMENT I'M "BETWEEN JOBS" BUT THINGS'LL WORK OUT.







THE
DEMON
O
N

CREATED BY
JACK KIRBY

WOOKEY HOLE

I SEE A WITCH!
SHE--SHE'S BECKONING
TO ME.

THERE'S A PLACE--
SPOOKY... NO, WOOKEY
WOOKEY HOLE!

W
I
T
C
H
E
S

IT'S FADING AWAY...!

TRY TO HOLD ONTO IT,
GLENDA! CONCENTRATE--
FOCUS ALL YOUR WILL ON
THE PHILOSOPHERS'
STONE!

IT'S NO GOOD, RANDU.
IT'S GONE.

WHATEVER RAPPORT I HAVE
WITH THE STONE, IT JUST
DOESN'T SEEM TO BE UNDER
MY CONTROL.

THE AWAKENING OF THE
PSYCHIC POWERS CAN BE
A LONG, FRUSTRATING
BUSINESS. YOU HAVE TO
WORK HARD AT IT!

BY ALAN GRANT,
MARK PAGELLA,
BILL WRAY, JOHN COSTANZA
TATJANA WOOD
and
DAN RASLER

THE WITCH-IMAGE WAS PROBABLY A PROJECTION FROM YOUR *UNCONSCIOUS*-- AND MY OWN EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME TO *IGNORE* SUCH MESSAGES AT MY PERIL.

BUT WHAT ABOUT *TINTAGEL*? JASON MIGHT NEED US!

FOR ALL WE KNOW, JASON MIGHT HAVE *SHARED* YOUR VISION-- HE MIGHT BE AT THIS WOOKIEE PLACE NOW.

THE WOOKIEE HOLE IS AN ANCIENT PLACE OF POWER AND IS NOT FAR FROM TINTAGEL. IT CAN DO NO HARM TO INVESTIGATE IT.

WOOKIEE HOLE? IT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING RUDE OUT OF A GEORGE LUCAS FILM...

ARVIS

MARCH 16TH

WOOKIEE HOLE

DESTINATION

Blonda Mark

RIGHTER

OH, RUDER THAN YOU'D BELIEVE, MY DEAR! HEH HEH!

THEY'RE COMING, MERLIN. LIKE FLIES TO ROTTING MEAT-- LIKE MESSIAHS TO THEIR GOLGOTHA--MY FOUR ELEMENTS ARE COMING! AND *WILLINGLY*, MIND YOU.

A LITTLE INFLUENCE FROM ME, PERHAPS-- BUT NO MORE THAN A *SMIDSEON*, EH? NO MORE THAN THE RULES ALLOW?

OOOO, I JUST LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER. IT MAKES ME FEEL SO... *SMUG*!

BUT NEVER LET IT BE SAID ASTEROTH WAS ONE TO *HOARD* HIS HAPPINESS. A PLEASURE SHARED IS A PLEASURE DOUBLED, I ALWAYS THINK... WELL, NOT ALWAYS. BUT OFTEN...

...SOMETIMES, ANYWAY!

THERE, YOU OLD GOAT. HOW'S THAT?

SWEET RELIEF? LITTLE BURST OF *ADRE* SURGING IN YOUR TRAITOR'S HEART?

YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS ABOMINATION! THE *TRIM-VIRATE OF HADES* WILL NEVER SANCTION--

THE SAME OLD SAME OLD, EH, MERLIN...



AAAGGH

SNAP

WHY DON'T YOU
PUT A SOCK IN IT--
FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING,
OF COURSE?



SOME DEMONS JUST DON'T KNOW
THE MEANING OF GRATITUDE. WELL,
YOU SUIT YOURSELF. IT'S YOUR
LIFE-- WITHIN LIMITS.

I'VE GOT BETTER THINGS
TO DO. I MUST MAKE
READY FOR MY...
GUESTS.



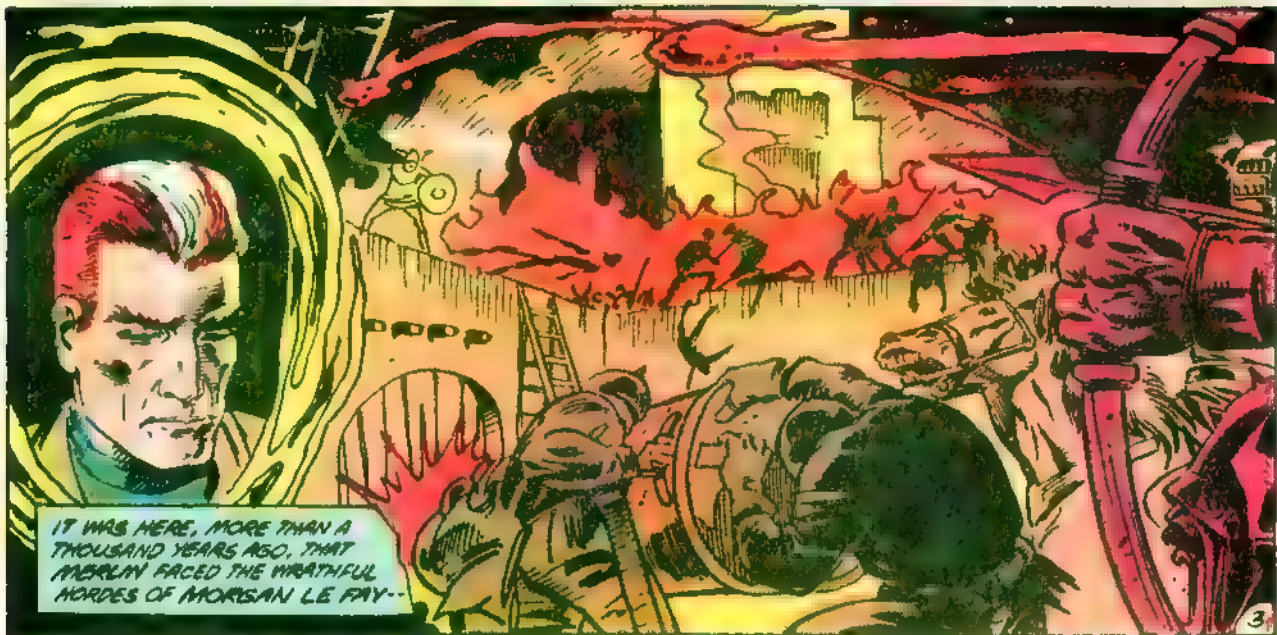
ANYONE. ANY IDEA WHERE I CAN LAY
MY HANDS ON THE ENTRAILS OF A
STILLBORN VAMPIRE?



YOU CAN GO
HOME NOW.
THANKS FOR
THE RIDE.



TINTAGEL CASTLE...
A HEAP OF STONES
THAT ONCE WAS HOME
TO WIZARDS AND
KING.

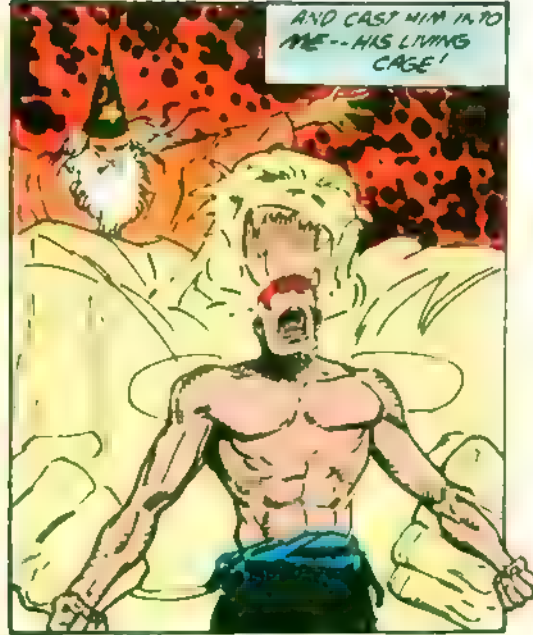


IT WAS HERE, MORE THAN A
THOUSAND YEARS AGO, THAT
MERLIN FACED THE WRATHFUL
HORDES OF MORISAN LE FAY--

AND WHEN THE WITCH-QUEEN'S MAGIC
HELD THE DAY, MERLIN RECALLED HIS
DEMON-- HIS HALF-BROTHER IN HELL.



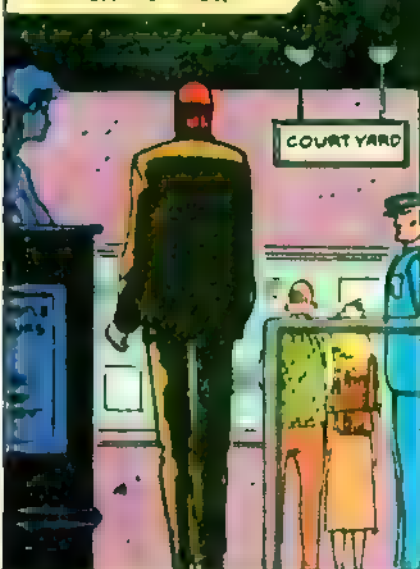
AND CAST HIM INTO
ME-- HIS LIVING
CAGE!



IT WAS HERE ETRISAN MADE
HIS VAIN BID FOR FREEDOM
LAST YEAR-- HERE HE LURED
MERLIN INTO THE ARCAINE
HAWTHORN GROVE..

TINTAGEL... SOMETIMES I THINK
IT'LL NEVER LET ME GO!

... AND THERE BE A STRANGE
STORY BEHIND THIS STATUE.

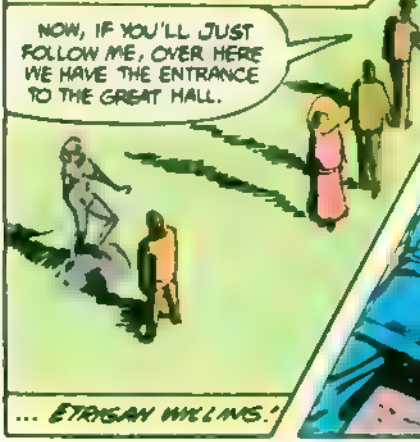


A YEAR AGO, 'TWEREN'T
EVEN THERE... ONE NIGHT, IT
JUST APPEARED--THE WATCH-
MEN DIDN'T EVEN KNOW TILL
MORNING. SOME SAY IT
WAS THE WORK OF THE
GREAT WARLOCK,
MERLIN HIMSELF.

NOT MERLIN. GLENDA
DID IT WITH THE
STONE... TOO
BAD SHE DIDN'T
LET ETRISAN
BITE OFF THE
STATUE'S
HEAD
INSTEAD OF
HER HAND

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, MORGAN
LE FAY. PERHAPS TONIGHT WILL BE
THE LAST TIME..

NOW, IF YOU'LL JUST
FOLLOW ME, OVER HERE
WE HAVE THE ENTRANCE
TO THE GREAT HALL.



... ETRISAN WILLING.

ACCORDING TO THIS
GUIDEBOOK, THIS IS ONE
OF THE LARGEST UNEX-
PLORED CAVE SYSTEMS
IN THE WORLD

WOOKEY HOLE



WATCH YOUR HEAD
NOW!

A BLIND MAN TAKING A
TOUR OF A CAVE... CRAZY!



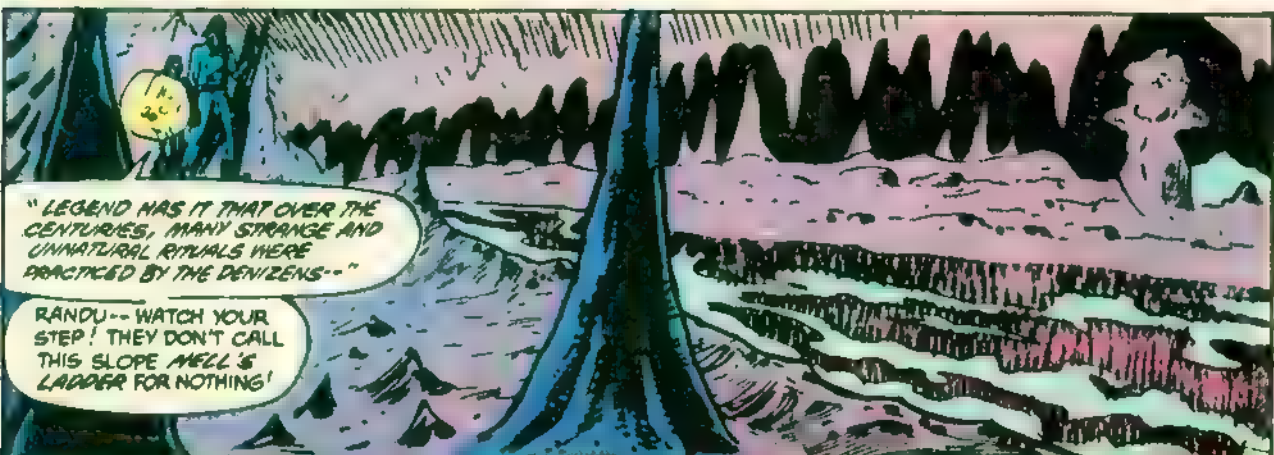
STILL, I DON'T THINK
IT'S A WILD GOOSE
CHASE. THERE'S A STRONG
FEELING OF... ~~ADWERS~~
HERE.

"FOR MORE THAN 50,000
YEARS, THE CAVES WERE
OCCUPIED--BY NEOLITHIC
MAN, BY CELTS AND SAXONS..



"LEGEND HAS IT THAT OVER THE
CENTURIES, MANY STRANGE AND
UNNATURAL RITUALS WERE
PRACTICED BY THE DENIZENS--"

RANDU-- WATCH YOUR
STEP! THEY DON'T CALL
THIS SLOPE *MEEL'S*
LADDER FOR NOTHING!



"A PRACTICE THAT LASTED UNTIL
THE LAST WITCH OF WOKEY HOLE
WAS RETRAINED BY A SERVANT OF
THE LORD!"

RANDU--IT'S THE
FIGURE I SAW IN THE
STONE TODAY!



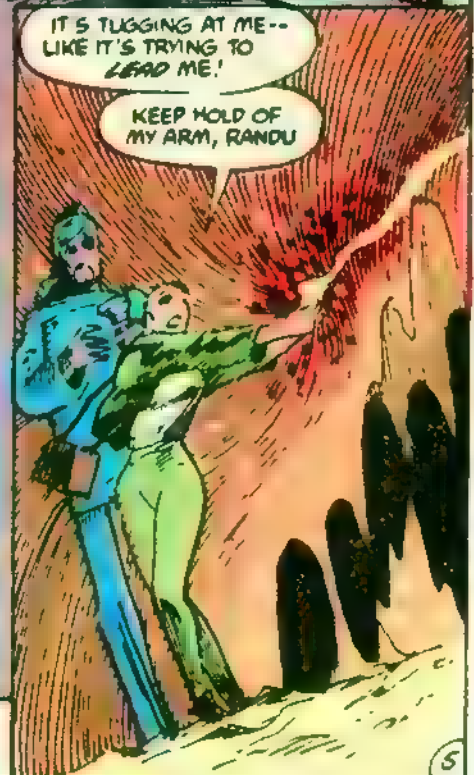
SO WHAT
NOW?

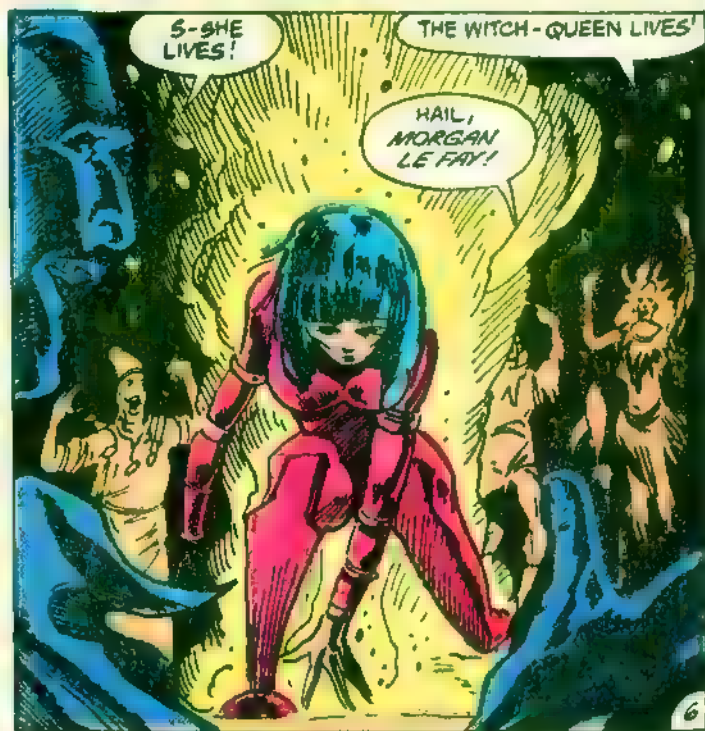
TRY MERLIN'S
STONE AGAIN!



IT'S TUGGING AT ME--
LIKE IT'S TRYING TO
LEAD ME!

KEEP HOLD OF
MY ARM, RANDU





THE FOOLS! THERE IS
A PRICE TO PAY--

MY
HAND--!

BY THE DARKLING
STARS! MY HAND!

AND PAY THEY WILL, AS PAY
THEY CAN. FOR THEIR SPELLS
AND SOULS MEAN NAUGHT
TO LE FAY--

WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE WITH
MY HAND?

AND EVEN LESS
TO ETRIGAN!

NEXT
DO DEMONS
DIE?

HERO HOTLINE

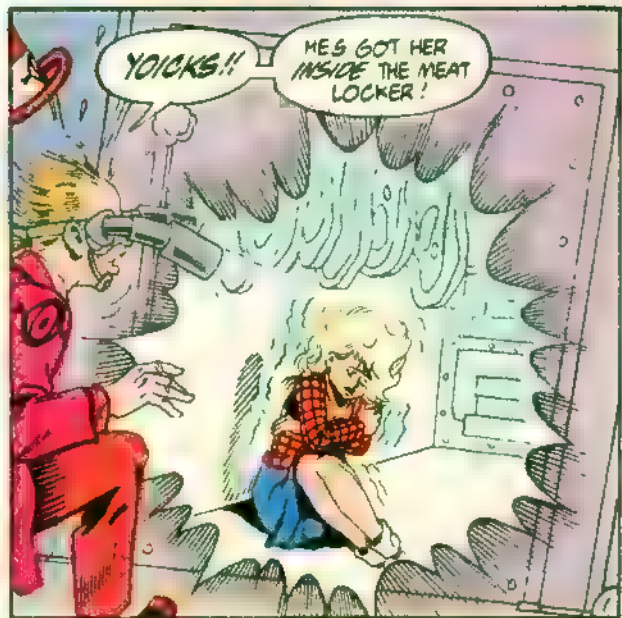
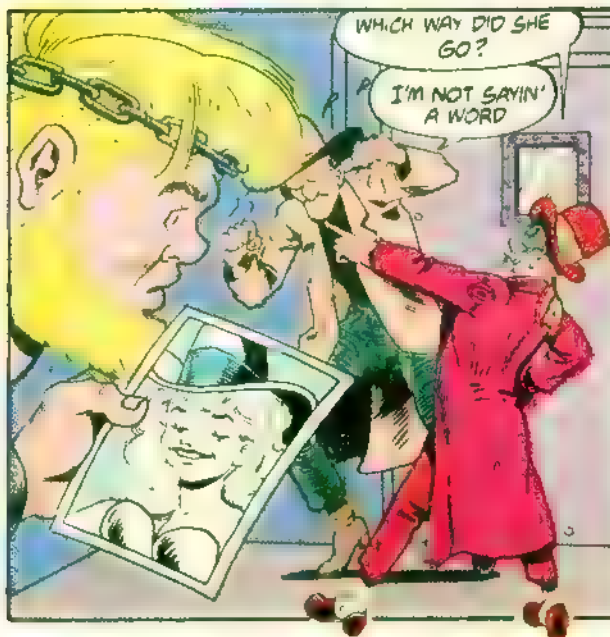
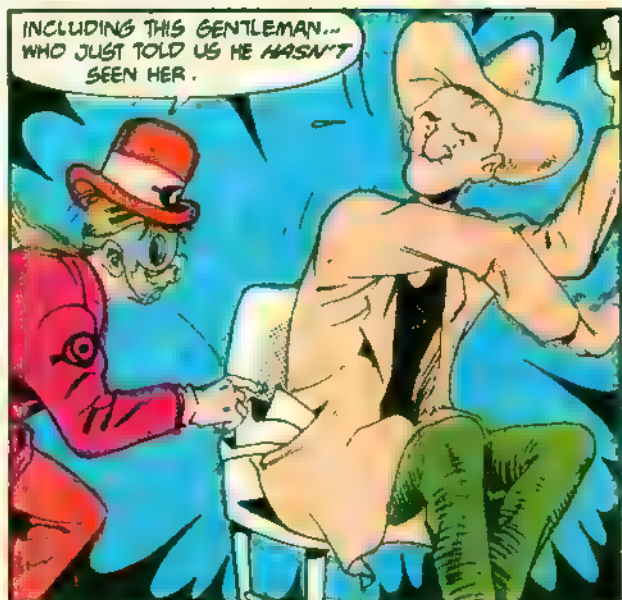
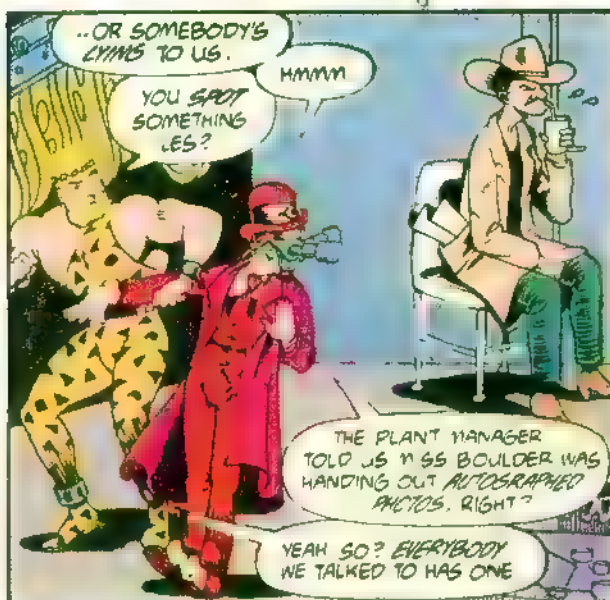
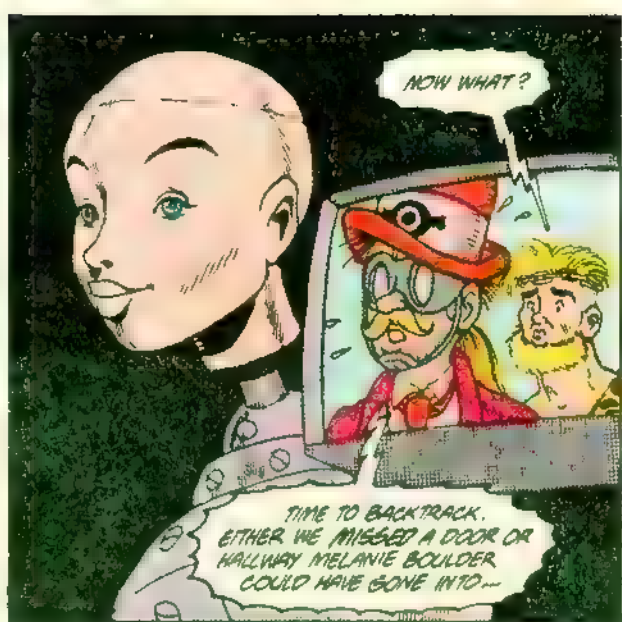
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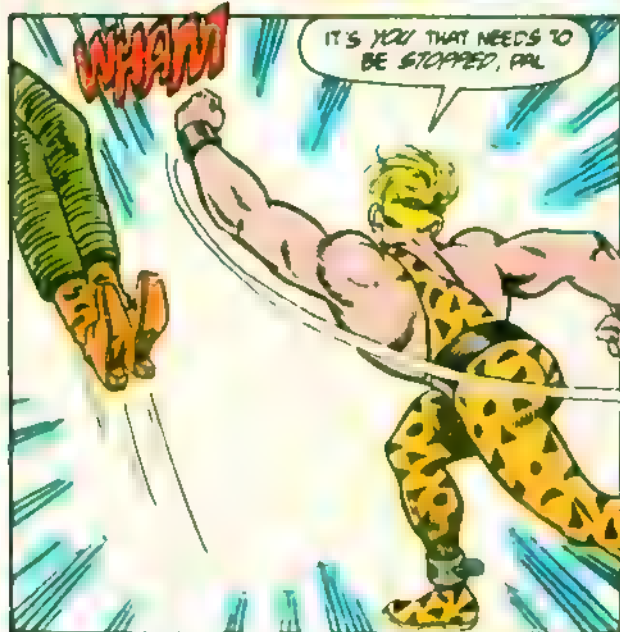
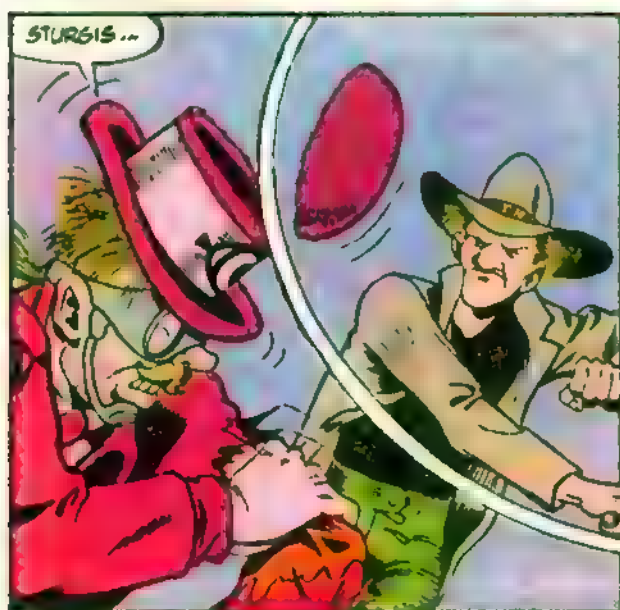
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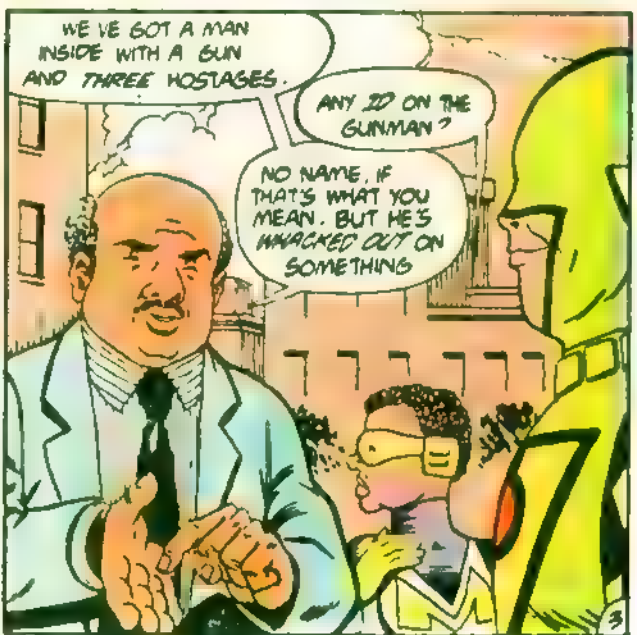
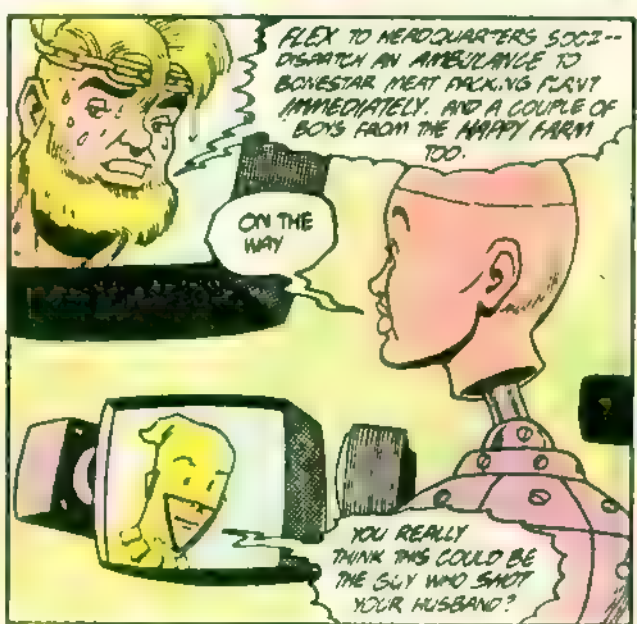
HOLD THE LINE, SIR
I'LL CONNECT YOU WITH
THE FBI

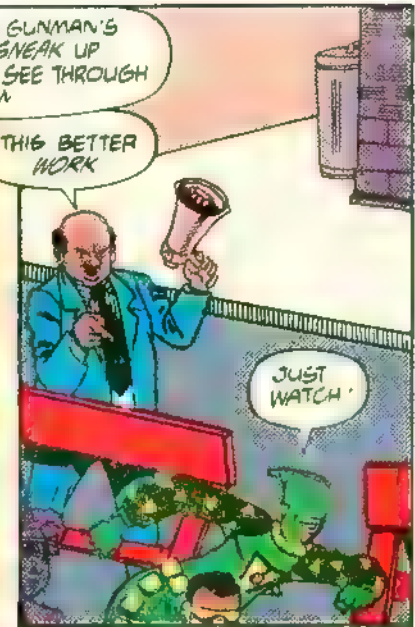
GOOD AFTERNOON, HERO
HOTLINE. NO, MA'AM WE CANNOT
ENDORSE ONE DRAIN CLEANER
OVER ANOTHER

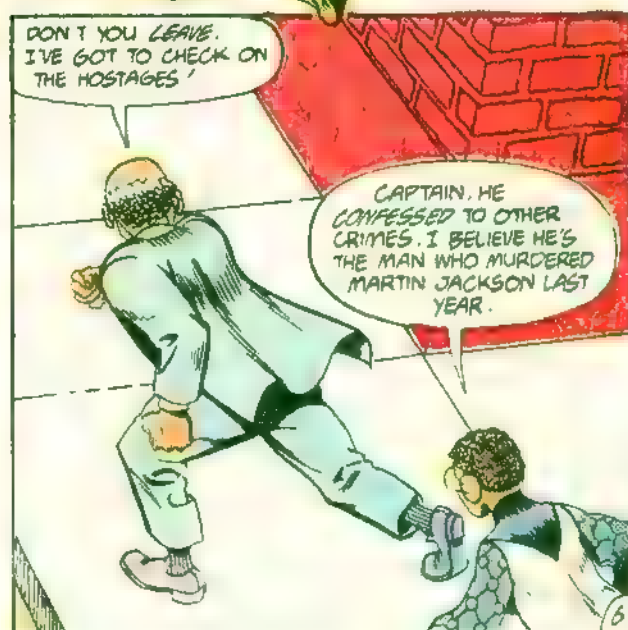
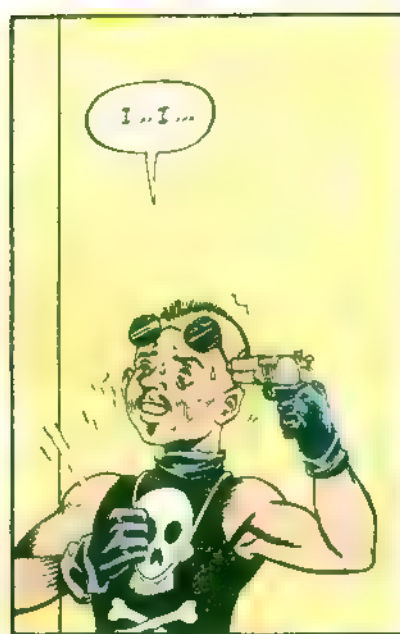
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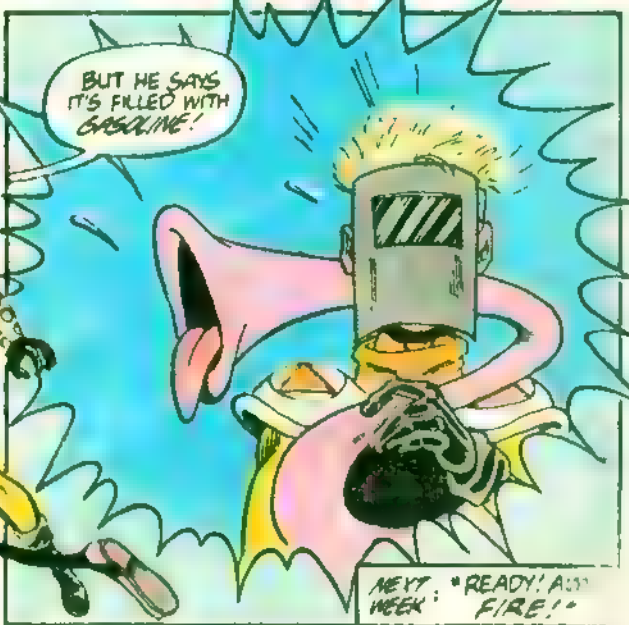
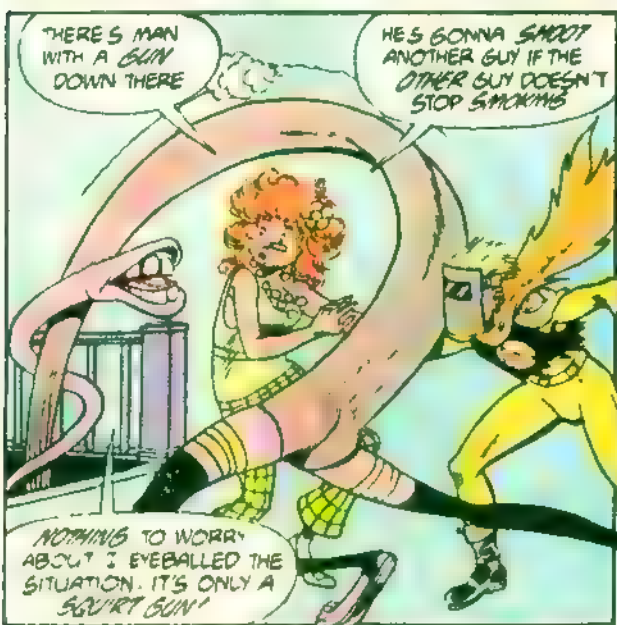
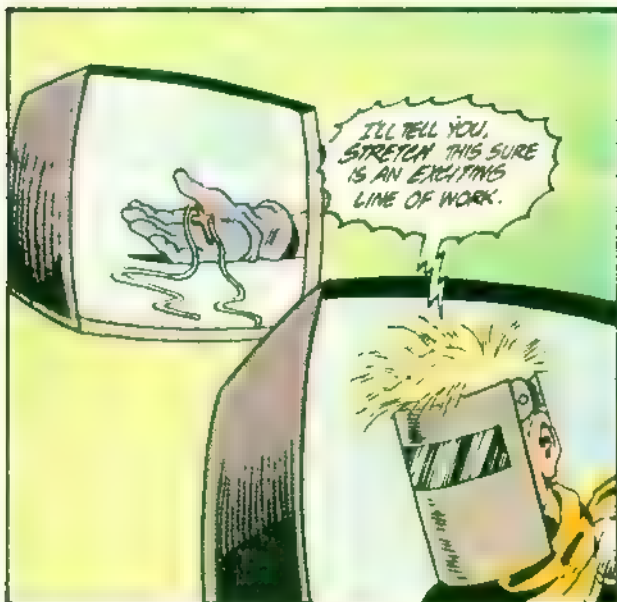












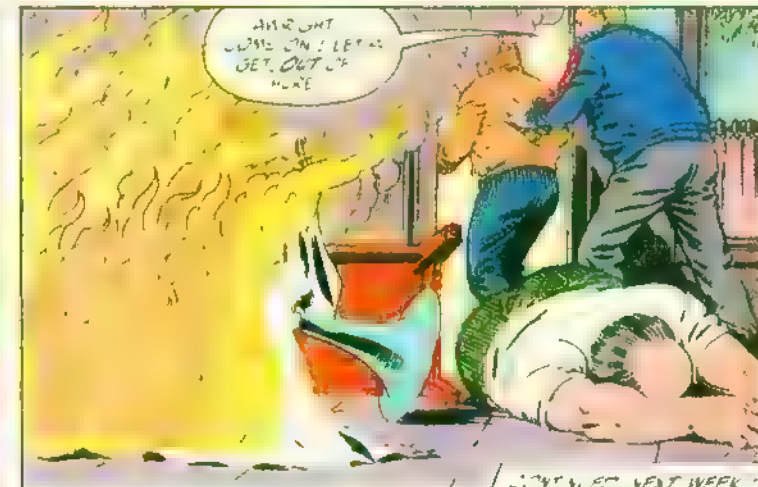
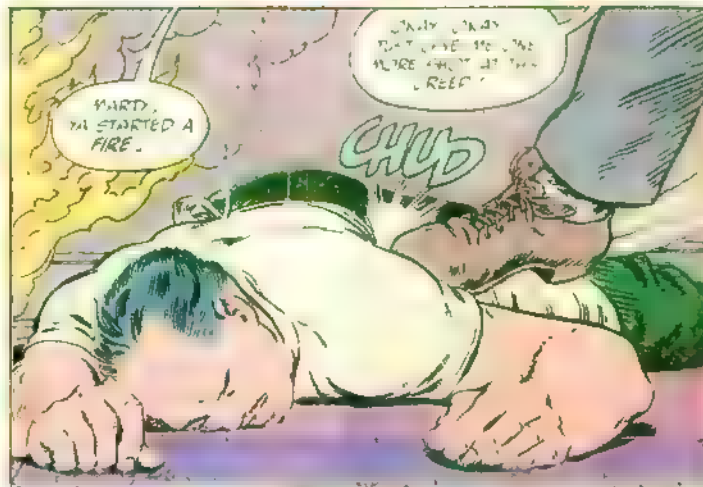
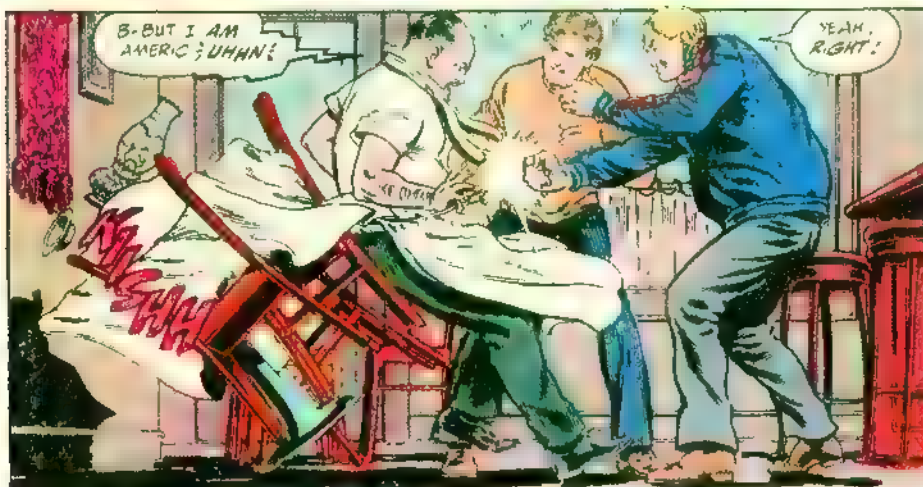
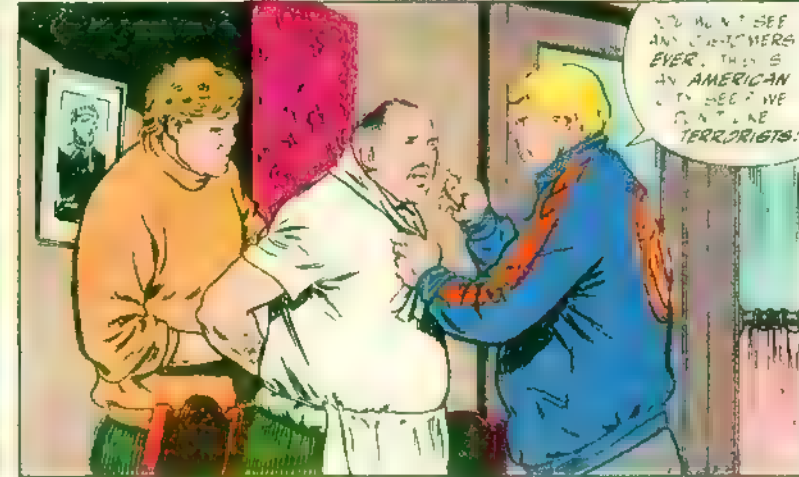
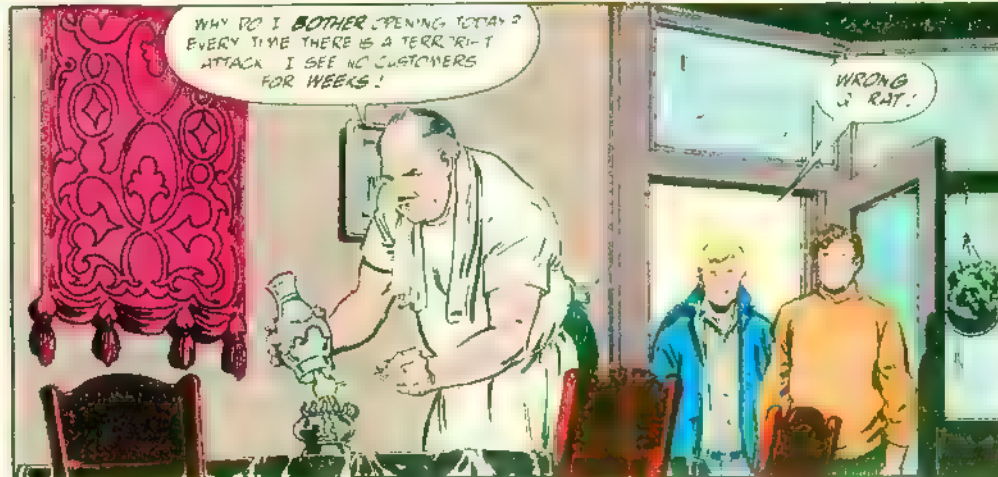
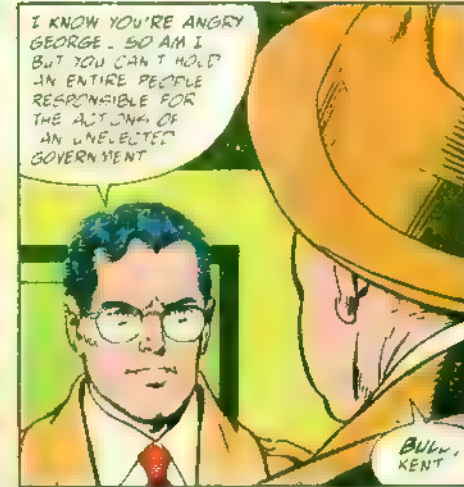
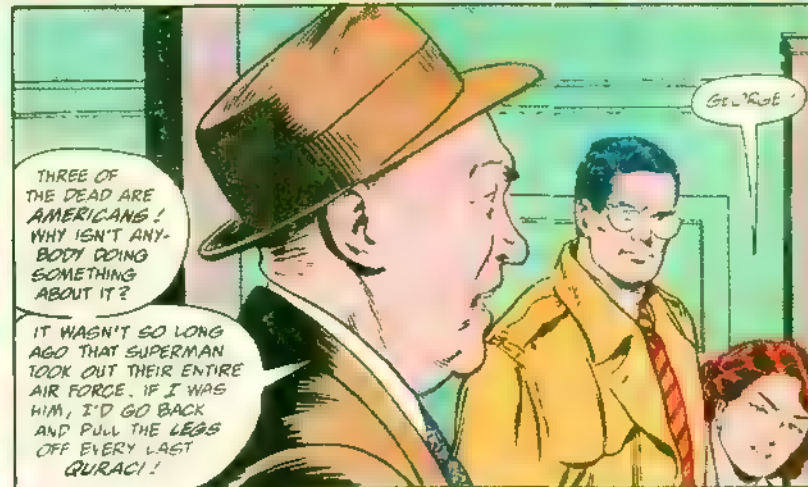
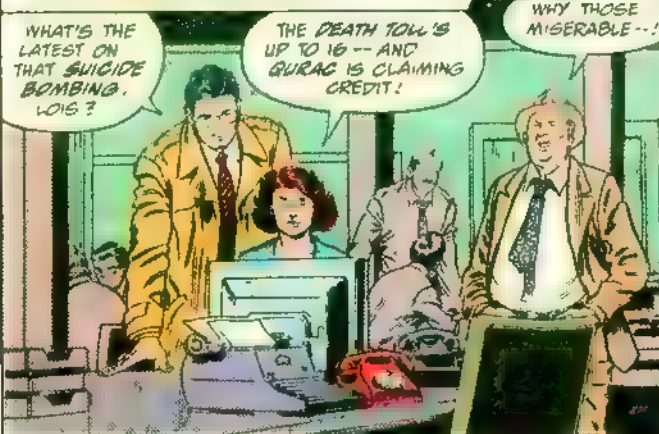
SUPERMAN

Created by
JERRY SIEGEL &
JOE SHUSTER

"AN EYE FOR AN EYE"

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TOM ZILKO - COLORIST
MIKE GARLIN - EDITOR
Special thanks to TOM PEYER

A MAJOR STORY DISRUPTS THE DAILY ROUTINE OF THE PLANET NEWSROOM.



CONTINUED NEXT WEEK!



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Dear Men & Women of Action

After a long lull, your covers have become majorly impressive once again. I was absolutely floored by Paul Chadwick's Green Lantern. GL seems to get most of the good covers, doesn't he? Well, he certainly deserves them. Alan Davis's Black Canary was also stunning. Eduardo Barreto draws Deadman exactly the way I've always pictured him. Now that he's not doing the Titans anymore, how about giving him a crack at the series?

This week's cover wasn't quite a classic, but it was good nonetheless, however, I haven't a clue as to who drew it. DIRECT CURRENTS lists Curt Swan as cover artist. I'm no expert, but this just does not look like Swan art. Besides, the signature looks like a stylized 'Y'. So who's the culprit?

Meanwhile, how about some rankings?

1) Blackhawk. It's back! Hooray! It's good to see that this feature is going to survive ACTION's change back to its old format. If any series here deserves its own book, it is indeed this one. Rick Burchett just keeps getting better and better. Of course, having an inker of John Nyberg's caliber doesn't hurt. The dialogue seems right on target for the late 40s. Of course, I wasn't around then, so who am I to say?

2) Secret Six. Thankfully, Marty Pasko resisted the temptation to make the mystery of Mockingbird TOO confusing. After 22 chapters, it all actually fits together. I first suspected Carlo di Rienzi to be Mockingbird when he was not shown on the plane at the end of #602. So he must have taken the role from August Durant to avenge the death of his friends. Very nice.

3) Green Lantern. Jim Owsley and Mark Bright are fine at presenting good old super hero action. The story has some nice dramatic touches, as when GL is left helpless holding up that building. Owsley seems to be surmounting the problem of characters acting contrary to their established behavior. Captain Atom's foolhardiness is annoying, but he's more or less like that in his own book, so I can't argue.

4) Black Canary. Unlike the first story, 'Knock 'Em Dead' has failed to baffle me completely—at least so far. You know this isn't such a horrible feature after all. I think Sharon Wright just needs to assess the way in which she tells her tales. The average reader can only be expected to remember so many charac-

ters and happenings from week to week when they appear to be totally unrelated to each other! The art, meanwhile, has some dazzling moments. As far as I'm concerned, most of Randy DuBurke's stranger experiments are paying off. Don't lose him.

5) Superman. There's nothing to say about this tiny strip that hasn't been said yet. It continues to be a nice little read.

6) Speedy. What a major disappointment this one is. Most of the art is bland and rather crude. It's not as bad as the story, which seems to be just a large number of clichés thrown together without much thought. Speedy spends the entire eight pages dealing with two attacks on himself and his baby. So what happens at the end? He enters his house, only to be faced with the prospect of another attack. I, for one, am not sitting on pins and needles.

Maybe this bothers me as much as it does because I've been a Titans fan for a long time and that book has 'most' always been put together with a great deal of care. Granted, I might also be slightly peeved, as a Titans fan, that Nightwing isn't playing much of a role in the story. He didn't appear at all this issue, although I suppose that's him in the house at the end. If he doesn't have an important role in the story, why don't you folks make it simple and leave him out altogether?

Matt Weinshenker
24 Gerdes Avenue
Verona, NJ 07044

You have but to ask, Matt—hence the Verheiden/Williams solo Speedy adventures appearing in the current run of this very comic.

To cover your cover queries. The Blackhawk cover was not the work of Curt Swan (whose BH cover did appear a few issues back), but was the effort of illustrator George Pratt, the artist of the beautiful ENEMY ACE hardcover volume due out soon. I'm afraid that Ed Barreto is going to be way too busy to lend his considerable talents to the dead wonder, though you might want to watch for the upcoming LEX LUTHOR Prestige Format special, written by Jim Hudnall and presented by Mike Carlin's House of Superman.

Plug, plug, plug, plug! I feel so cheap.

.....

Dear DC,

By my calculations, ACW #628 marks seven months of a weekly magazine. By

now the DC production staff must either be adapting to the strain or bouncing off the padded walls of their cells (possibly both?). Please pass the word that their efforts are appreciated. As part of the never ending (I hope) weekly poll, here are my choices.

1) Green Lantern. Always a treat. Even when other ACW features have let me down, GL has provided consistent enjoyment. The appearance of Captain Atom is being handled very well.

2) Secret Six. This series reminds me of the old Mission Impossible TV series. I feel a little pride in the fact that the Secret Six and its intrigue was revived by the comics industry before the television industry caught on. Just goes to show that you guys have a good grasp on what is good entertainment.

3) Blackhawk. By far, the most adult of the current features. I was surprised by the complaint by Mr. Roche in the lettercol. I agree with a parent's responsibility to filter both print and television input to their children, but to feel 'betrayed' because of a false assumption on his part is misplacing the blame. You did not intentionally mislead him. If he is a current comic book reader, he should know that comics have grown up quite a bit and you never know when real life problems will rear their ugly heads in a comic. Anyone who doesn't at least check for the Comics Code Seal before handing over a comic to a seven year old had better be prepared for those embarrassing questions that only a seven year old can ask.

Good luck on the new mature readers' Blackhawk. I'm looking forward to the arrival of the first child of ACW.

4) Superman. Curt Swan's rendering of Superman has always been a favorite of mine. My interest in the outcome of this storyline makes me wish for more pages each week.

5) Nightwing. Give up the pretense. For some reason the brass at DC wouldn't let you do a feature on Speedy without sugarcoating it with another character (like a popular Titan). I like the current storyline. It seems that this feature can stand on its own without even a glimpse of Nightwing. I think Roy Harper qualifies as the first character to need a babysitter before he can go into action as Speedy.

6) Black Canary. After five installments of the 'Knock 'Em Dead' story, I've lost all track of the plot. It just doesn't have the staying power to stick.

in my mind from week to week. Could be my fault but it still goes at the bottom of my list

Overall, this issue lives up to the quality I expect from DC and ACW. See you next week.

Tom Longfellow
7972 Millstream Court
Elkridge, MD 21227

Thanks for the thumbs up vote, Tom. By the way, we do conduct tours of our padded cells, Tuesdays and Thursdays. You must call first, though.

Dear ACW,

I get ACW all month long, even though I am only ten. Because I am concerned about kids under my age who buy this comic, I am glad to hear you're cutting Blackhawk (I'm likewise glad because I hated it). Another I would like to see go is Black Canary for the same reasons.

Now for the dreadful suggestions (EEEEEEK!)

1) I think there should be four Show cases a year (that is, if there are enough new series in the year)

2) In #622 we saw a one-shot of the newest "super-hero" of the DC Universe: Starman. I would like to see more features like this, but of other characters or groups.

3) In #636 you're giving ACW "fresh blood" (thank God!) I think after six to eight months of polling readers you should have more issues like this.

4) Give Supes more room.

5) Keep the threat of Wild Pup knowing Wild Dog's identity alive.

6) More weeklies! (!!)

All in all, the last six and a half months have been enjoyable.

See you in seven.

Sean Minstead
9800 SW Washington Street
Portland, OR 97229

"See you in seven"—??! Hey, that's our line!

Dear Editors

I have put off writing this letter far too long! I have heard that ACTION COMICS WEEKLY will cease publication after #640 and be replaced later by a monthly Superman title written by George Perez. While this title will be welcome, the loss of ACTION COMICS WEEKLY cannot be made up for with mini-series and ongoing monthlies.

Some of the series work best in short installments ("Wild Dog" and "Deadman" come immediately to mind), while others are so complex that they could easily adapt to any format ("Blackhawk" and "Secret Six" are obvious candidates for their own monthly titles). It is true that I have disliked a large number of the series run in this title and that has been a major investment, but the format gave me something to look forward to each week and it was ALWAYS the first title I would read upon getting home.

I am writing particularly because

Secret Six was my favorite series in the 60s (along with Doom Patrol and Challengers of the Unknown) and I have been more than impressed by Pasko's handling both of this series and of Blackhawk. His years out in the real world have definitely given him more breadth of vision and Pasky Pasko is now certainly capable of withstanding the same degree of criticism that he was so well known for in his 70s LOC's. I was particularly moved by his story focusing on Tony Mantegna in Secret Six. I have been impressed in general by DC's positive depiction of gays in the past few years, but Pasko took a daring step beyond what other writers have done by depicting homosexuality as "normal" and by presenting us with a positive role model who is a strong character both in emotions and in his personality. Pasko presented Tony's sexuality in such a way that it was clear he WASN'T thinking, "Whew! Now that I've got that out of the way, I can forget about this for a while!". It is clear that Tony's sexuality will come up in the series, WHEN it needs to. I believe this is also one of the rare times that a gay man has been depicted as having a deep level of understanding of what love is in all of its forms.

As for Mockingbird's identity, I went back and forth between the two people who were identified correctly and wrongly as the Secret Six's leader. I had always assumed the doctor was Mockingbird in the original series, simply because I felt he was the most capable of having come up with his own problem solution and therefore the least likely to be a candidate for blackmail or coercion. Yet, at the beginning of this series, I began to feel that Rafael's father might be Mockingbird. This was based purely on the way the characters were interacting. This has been by far the finest series that has run in ACW, in spite of its poor ratings, which I think are due to Pasko's relatively non-linear storytelling style and the overall complexity of his plots and characters.

Although I enjoyed Grell's Blackhawk series (I did NOT, by the way, get much out of Chaykin's prototype for the current series, and am glad that the current writers have chosen only to maintain the framework of his vision just as Andy Helfer has wisely chosen to do with his vision of The Shadow), I believe Pasko has moved away from Milton Caniff pastiche and has provided solid footing for the upcoming monthly series. For the first time ever, I have taken a real interest in the characters and I STILL detest them all! Rick Burchett's artwork uses layout techniques from an earlier period, but has a modern edge to it that reflects the influence of such underrated masters as Curt Swan and Jim Aparo (I'm talking mostly about composition, pacing, and flow). The coloring has been moody and has been a very important part of the artwork. Tom Ziuko has impressed me in much of his work as being one of the top colorists in the field today.

I did not care for the Wild Dog mini-series, in spite of being a big Collins and

Beatty fan, but I suppose I found the eight-page format to be the ideal dose for such a conglomeration of stereotypes and caricatures. John Nyberg's inks also served to give a highly professional and polished look to the cartoony artwork and yet Beatty's layouts and angles grow more complex even as he maintains his somewhat simple cartoony style. I especially enjoyed the run with "Wild Dog, Jr.", and was particularly impressed by the rather surprising ending with the murderer confessing because she had injured a young boy.

I had found Green Lantern extremely nauseating until the sudden change of direction a few issues back. The team-up with Captain Atom is humorous as it essentially pokes fun at the very concept of super heroes and how useless they would probably be if they really existed. I stopped reading the Superman feature a while back as it seemed not to be moving along at all, but I intend to go back and read them in sequence once the story is completed.

Nightwing and Speedy gets a bit preachy and melodramatic at times, but is enjoyable because it delves deeper into the personalities of two rather faceless longstanding DC heroes. Many of The Phantom Stranger stories have been as inspired as the 70s run of the character's own title, while others have followed too closely the "new direction" of the character as an emissary from Heaven (a move that I hope will soon be corrected).

Well, there are probably some series I forgot to mention. But this is my first LOC in several years, having been spoiled by having a computer network to post most of my reviews on. The fact that I am writing an actual LOC is testimony to how important ACW has been to this reader.

Mark H. Schmieder
27 Barnes Street
Waltham, MA 02154

NEXT ISSUE: All our heroes return to continue their adventures. Plus a Wild Dog cover by Rick Burchett. Be here, aloha!

Brian Augustyn



NOT A VERY
FLATTERING
PHOTO!

Washington Morning Herald
PHANTOM LADY SAVES VEEP

HAS WWII
HEROINE
RETURNED?

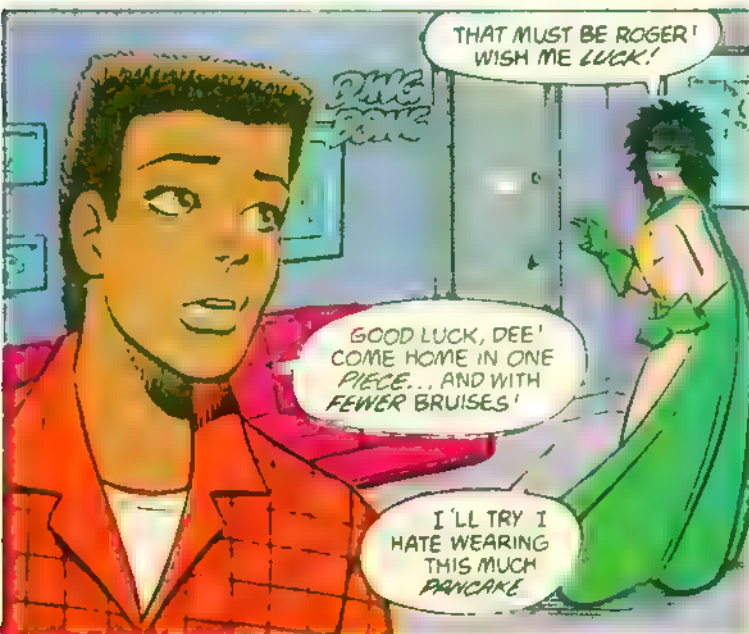
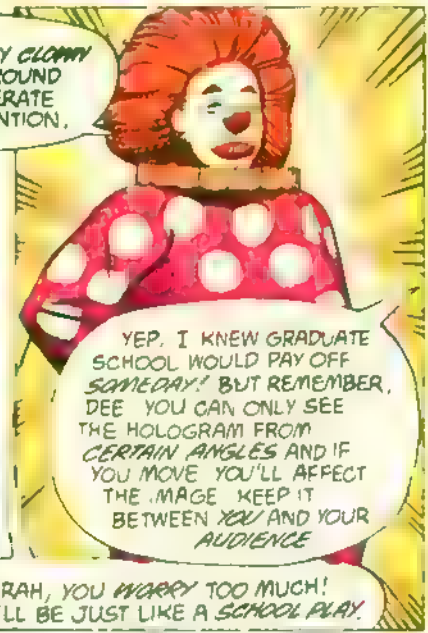
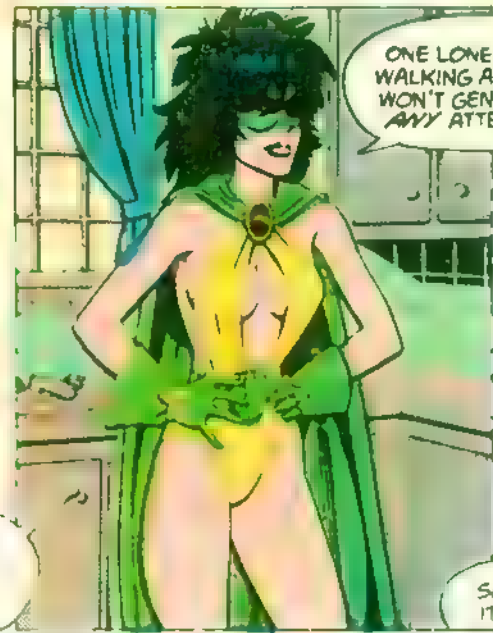
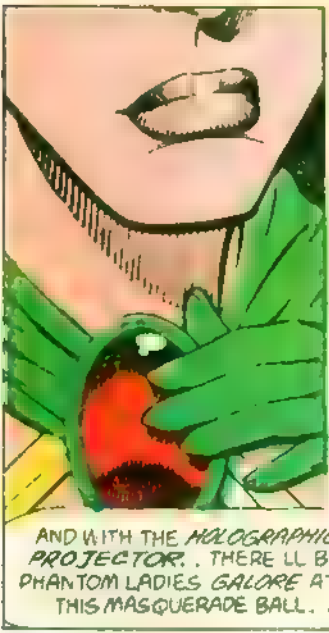


MAYBE SO, DEE,
BUT YOUR NIGHTIE
IS THE HOTTEST
THING IN TOWN.

**PHANTOM
LADY**

*Belle of the
Ball*

LEN STRAZENSKI
WRITER
CHUCK AUSTEN
PENCILLER
GARY MARTIN
INKER
JOHN COSTANZA
LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE
COLORIST
MARK WARD
EDITOR



ARE YOU SURE YOU
WANT TO GO THROUGH
WITH THIS, DEE?

WE'VE GOT
NO CHOICE IT'S
TODAY OR NEVER!

LES MILLE YEUX IS A MAJOR
INTERNATIONAL CRIME CARTEL,
BUT JUST BECAUSE THE FILE
IS MISSING DOESN'T
MEAN...

IT MEANS EVERYTHING! WE KNOW
THAT GUERREHART BEEN PRESSURING
DADDY AND THEN THE OFFICE FILE
DISAPPEARS AND DADDY DECIDES
TO ATTEND THIS STUPID PARTY.

BUT THERE ARE
DUPLICATES IN
OTHER OFFICES,
AND MAYBE HE
JUST WANTS TO
ATTEND FOR
POLITICAL
REASONS.

BUT NOTHING!
SOMETHING'S GOING
DOWN
TONIGHT, AND IF GUERREHART
GETS THAT FILE, HE'LL BE ABLE
TO PLUG LEAKS IN HIS
ORGANIZATION ALL OVER
THE COUNTRY!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S
GOT ON MY FATHER, BUT I
PROMISED MY MOTHER I'D
KEEP DADDY OUT OF TROUBLE,
AND I AM GOING TO DO JUST
THAT!

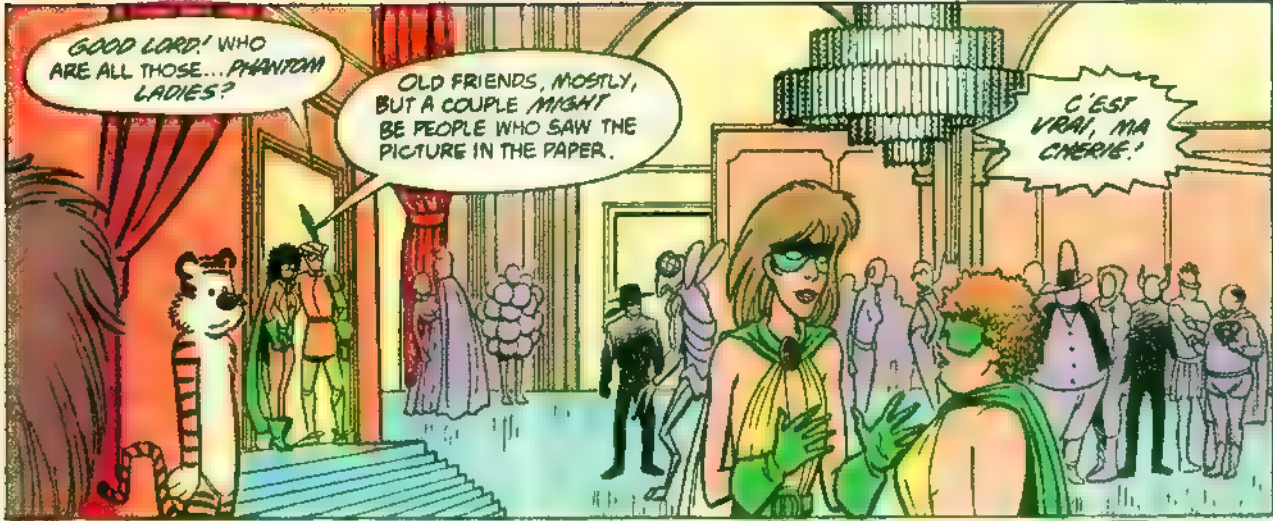
OKAY... OKAY! LET'S JUST BE
CAREFUL IN THERE.

SUGAR, THAT WAS
MY COLLEGE MOTTO.

THE GUERREHART
MANSION, SIR!

WOW! I GUESS
CRIME DOES PAY WHAT
A PALACE!

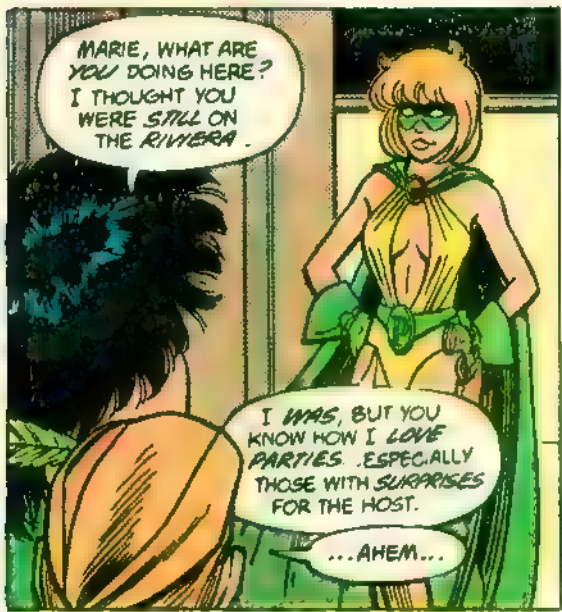
FORTRESS IS MORE
LIKE IT, THERE'S MORE
SECURITY FOR THIS PARTY THAN
THE PRESIDENTIAL INAUG-
URATION.



GOOD LORD! WHO ARE ALL THOSE... PHANTOM LADIES?

OLD FRIENDS, MOSTLY, BUT A COUPLE MIGHT BE PEOPLE WHO SAW THE PICTURE IN THE PAPER.

C'EST VRAI, MA CHERIE!



MARIE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL ON THE RIVIERA.

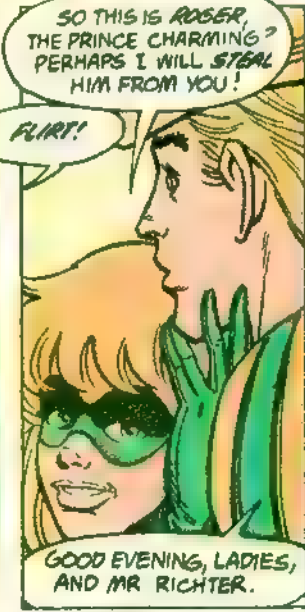
I WAS, BUT YOU KNOW HOW I LOVE PARTIES. ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH SURPRISES FOR THE HOST.

...AHEM...



ROGER, THIS IS MY COLLEGE ROOMMATE, MARIE SALCAPPE. MARIE, ARE THOSE YOUR REAL COLTS?

OF COURSE, THE SECURITY PEOPLE LET ME BRING THEM IN BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT LOADED. AT THE TIME.



SO THIS IS ROGER, THE PRINCE CHARMING? PERHAPS I WILL STEAL HIM FROM YOU!

FLIRT!

GOOD EVENING, LADIES, AND MR RICHTER.

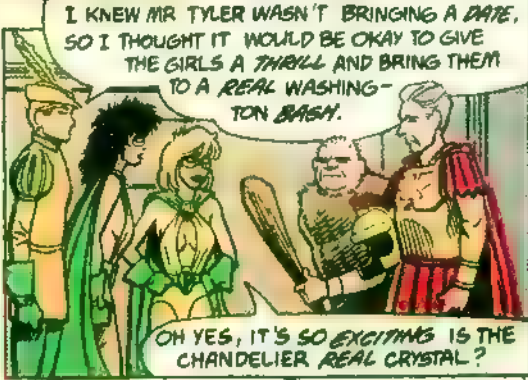


INTERESTING COSTUMES, LADIES... VERY POPULAR TONIGHT.

YES, MR. GUERREHART, EVER SINCE THAT STRANGE WOMAN SAVED THE VICE PRESIDENT, I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE THE ONLY ONE, BUT APPARENTLY NOT.

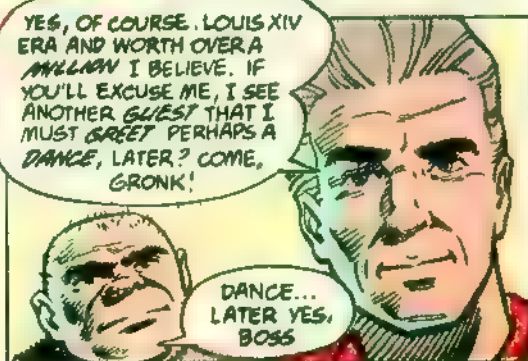
YES, SOMETIMES WE THINK OURSELVES SO CLEVER, ONLY TO FIND OUT WE HAVE BEEN... OBVIOUS. AND YOU ARE..?

JUST TWO ASSISTANTS FROM MY OFFICE, MR. GUERREHART.



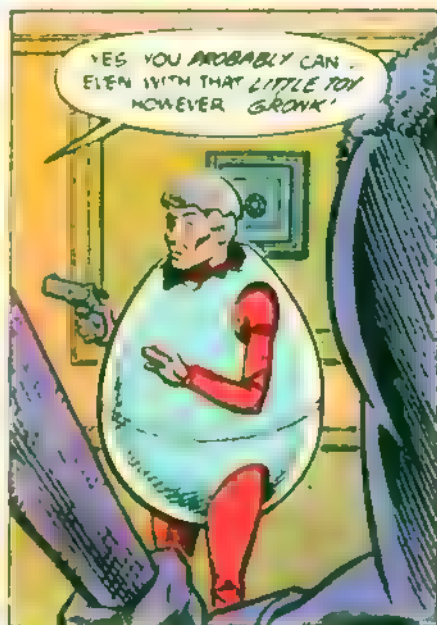
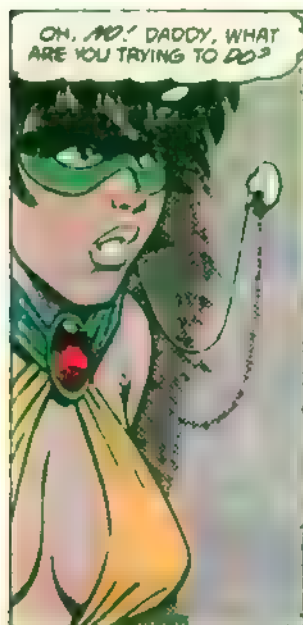
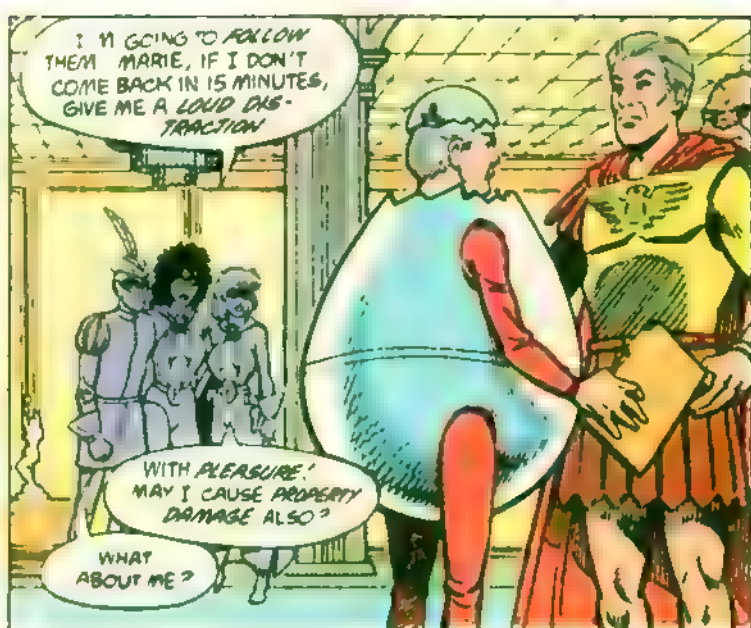
I KNEW MR TYLER WASN'T BRINGING A DATE, SO I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE OKAY TO GIVE THE GIRLS A THRILL AND BRING THEM TO A REAL WASHING-TON BASH.

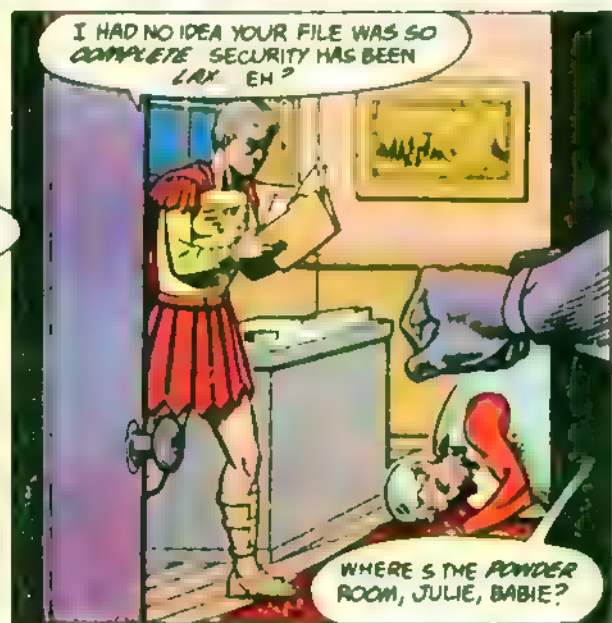
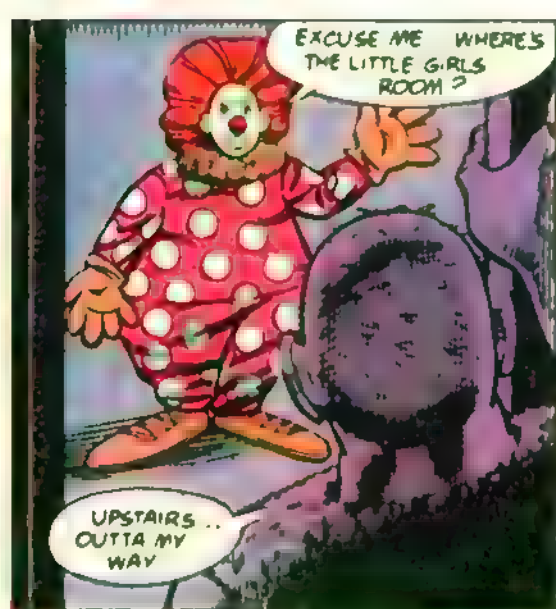
OH YES, IT'S SO EXCITING IS THE CHANDELIER REAL CRYSTAL?

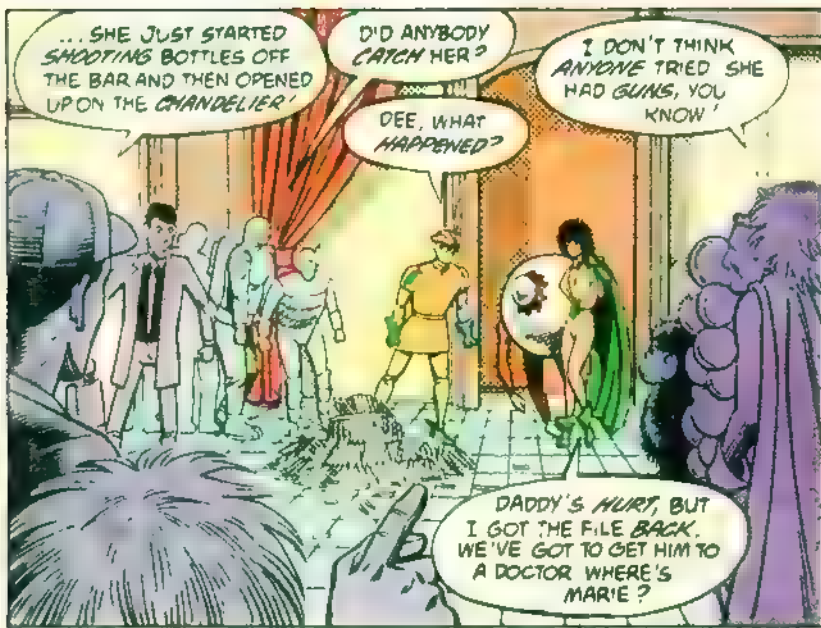


YES, OF COURSE. LOUIS XIV ERA AND WORTH OVER A MILLION I BELIEVE. IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I SEE ANOTHER GUEST THAT I MUST GREET PERHAPS A DANCE, LATER? COME, GRONK!

DANCE... LATER YES, BOSS







... SHE JUST STARTED SHOOTING BOTTLES OFF THE BAR AND THEN OPENED UPON THE CHANDELIER!

DID ANYBODY CATCH HER?

I DON'T THINK ANYONE TRIED SHE HAD GUNS, YOU KNOW!

DEE, WHAT HAPPENED?

DADDY'S HURT, BUT I GOT THE FILE BACK. WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM TO A DOCTOR WHERE'S MARIE?



ON THE RUN FROM SOME SECURITY GUARDS SHE SHOT DOWN THE CHANDELIER!

IT FIGURES... MARIE JUST LOVES TO SHATTER CRISTAL.



FREEZE

UH-OH!

OOOPS!

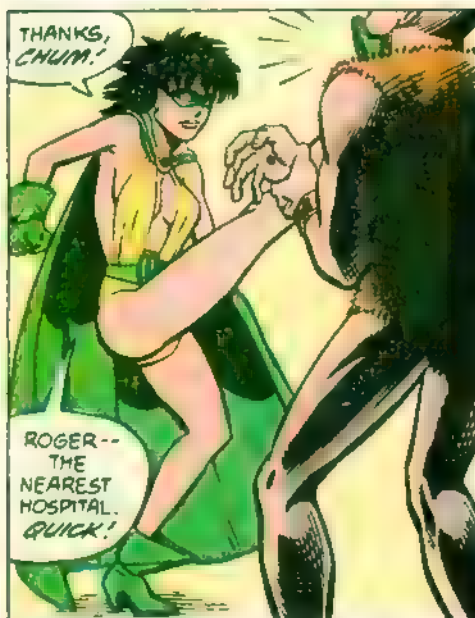


BLAM

UH!

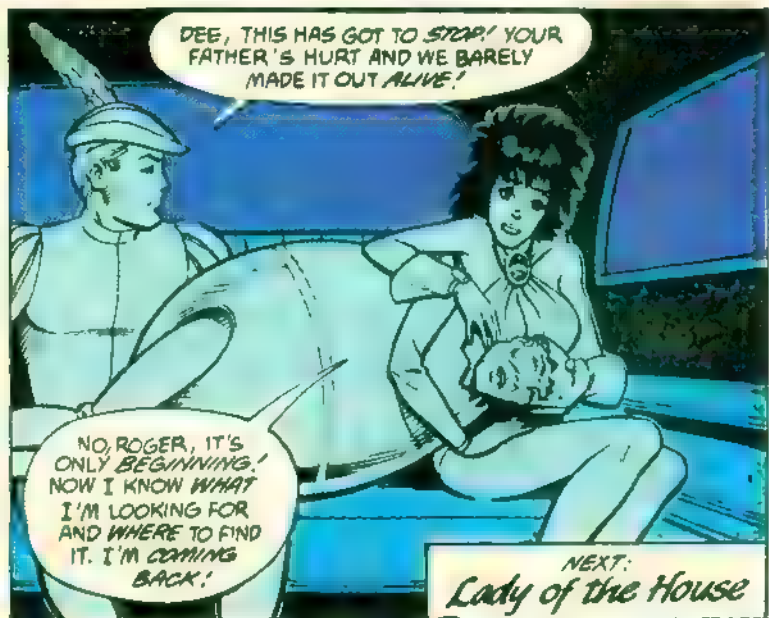


ALL YOURS NOW, MA CHERIE! I MUST RUN! AU REVOIR!



THANKS, CHUM!

ROGER-- THE NEAREST HOSPITAL. QUICK!



DEE, THIS HAS GOT TO STOP! YOUR FATHER'S HURT AND WE BARELY MADE IT OUT ALIVE!

NO, ROGER, IT'S ONLY BEGINNING! NOW I KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR AND WHERE TO FIND IT. I'M COMING BACK!

NEXT:
Lady of the House

WILD DOG



CRACK UP

THE SERIES
WRITER • CO-CREATORS • PENCILLER
JOHN NYBERG CARL GAFFORD
INNER
COLORIST
EDITOR

Chapter
4

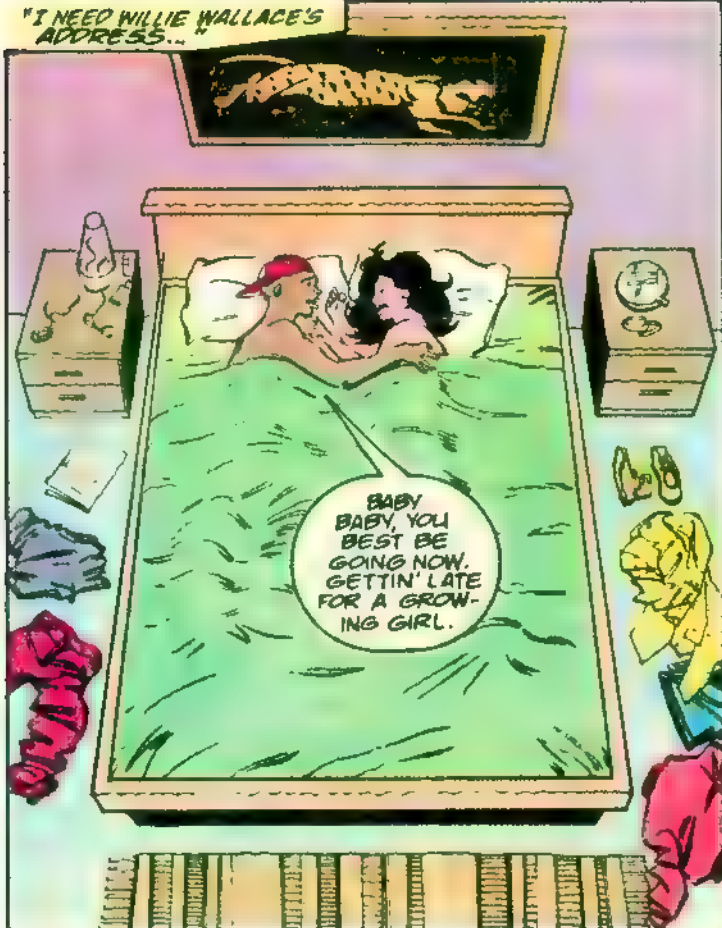
RUNG RUNG!

ON MY
GOD - WHAT
HAS HE
DONE...

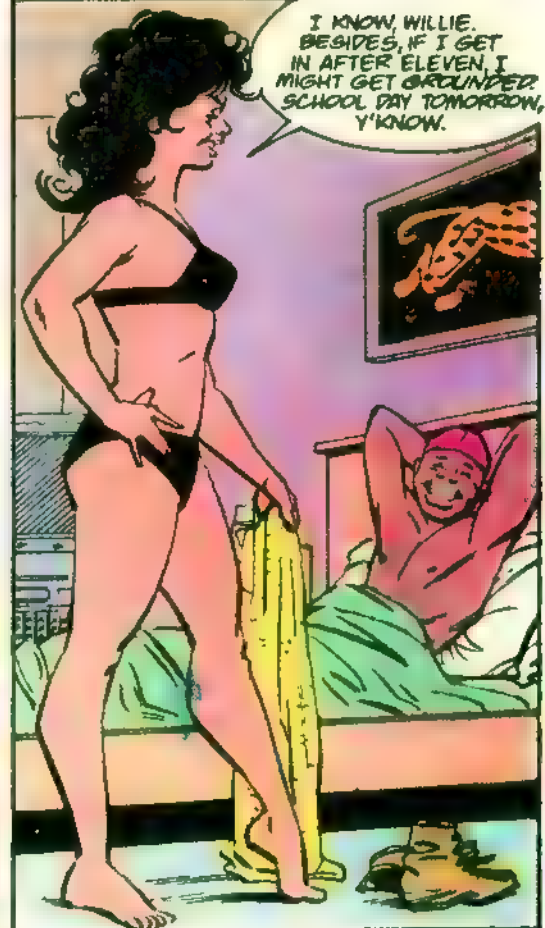




"I NEED WILLIE WALLACE'S ADDRESS..."



BABY
BABY, YOU
BEST BE
GOING NOW.
GETTIN' LATE
FOR A GROW-
ING GIRL.



I KNOW, WILLIE.
BESIDES, IF I GET
IN AFTER ELEVEN, I
MIGHT GET GROUND-
SCHOOL DAY TOMORROW.
Y'KNOW.



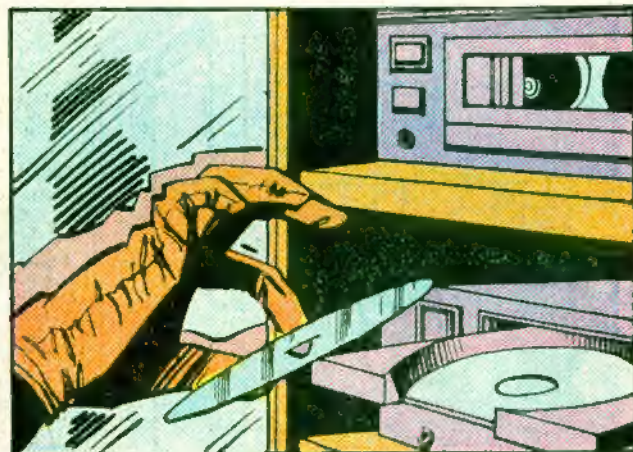
LOCK THE DOOR
BEHIND YOU,
BABY!





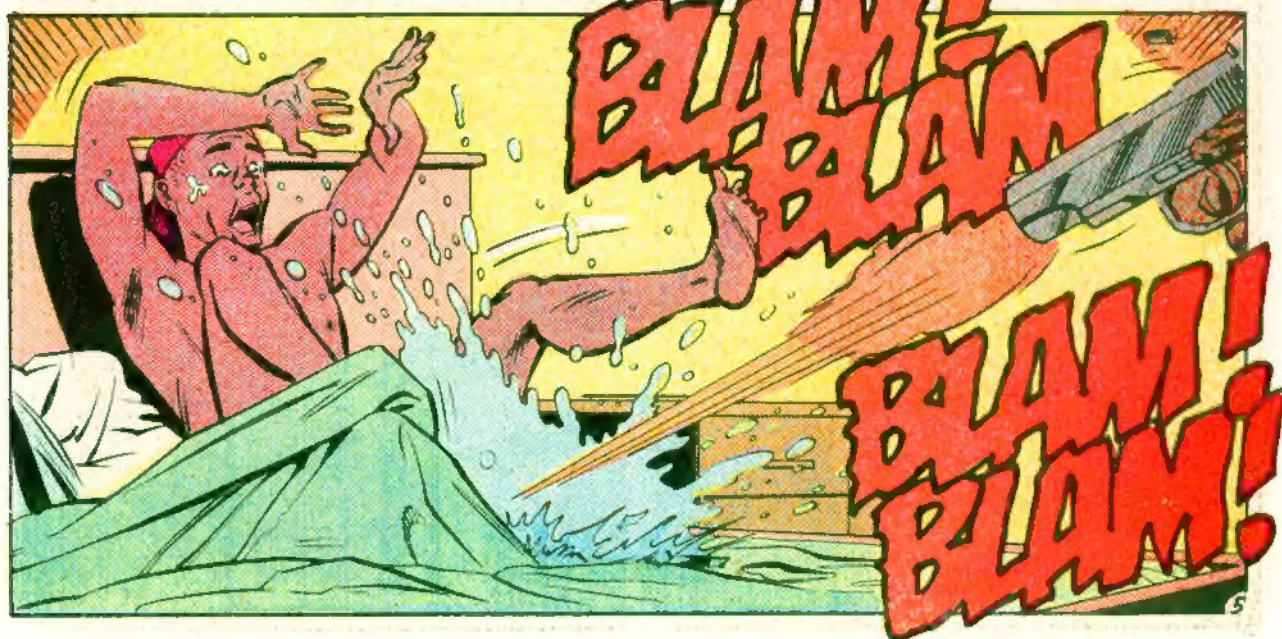
KLIK!

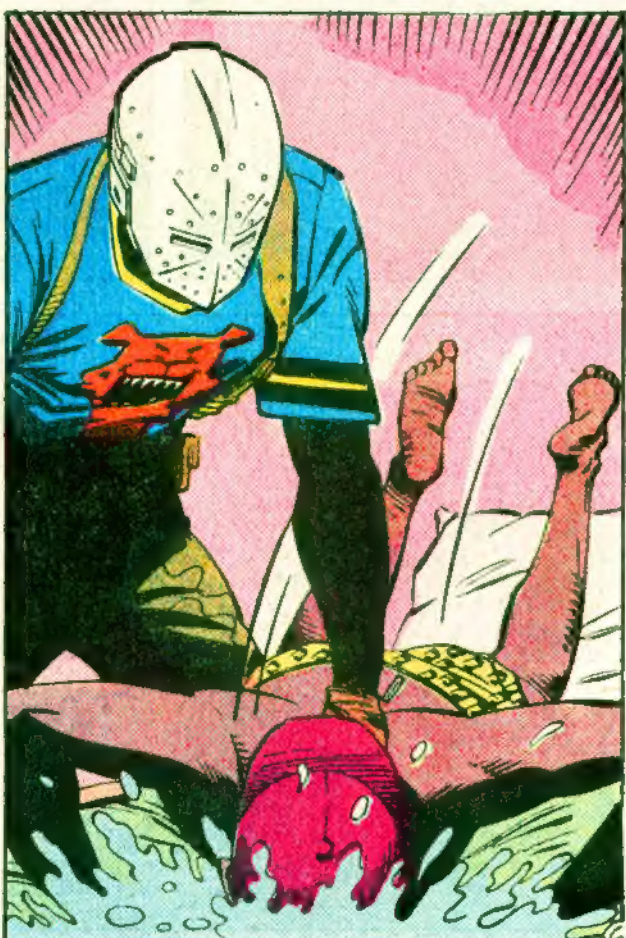
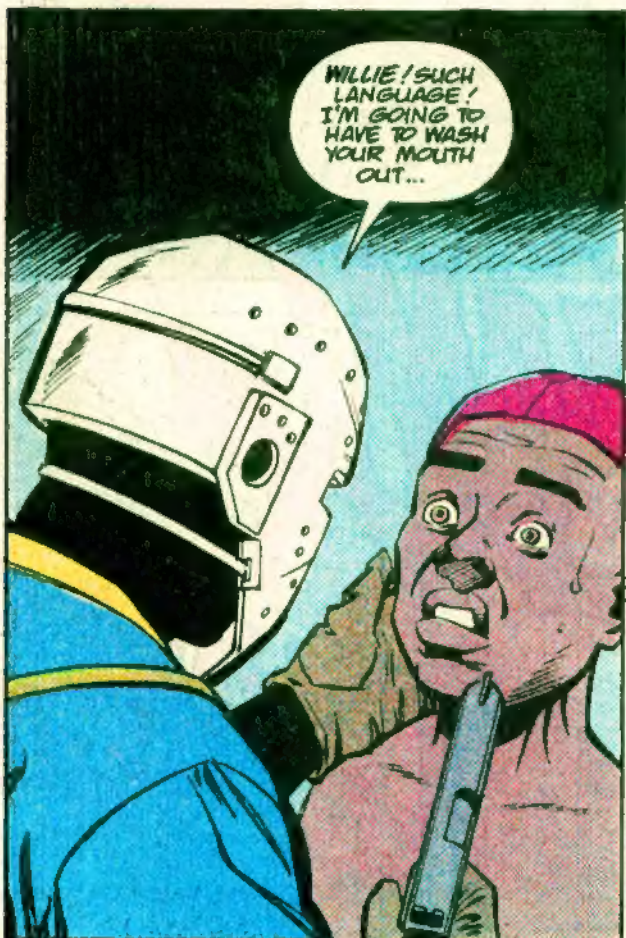
THAT'S A
GOOD GIRL.
LOVE THAT
TRILEBAYT.



♪ ♪ ♪
YOUR BUTT IS MINE
♪ ♪



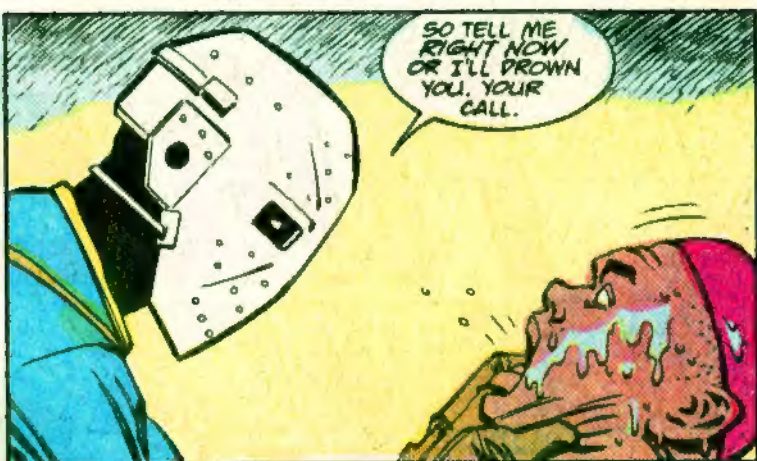




NOW WE DON'T HAVE LONG, WILLIE...
I'VE MADE A LOT OF NOISE AND
WE'LL HAVE COMPANY SOON...



SO TELL ME
RIGHT NOW
OR I'LL DROWN
YOU, YOUR
CALL.



I BUY IT FROM
JAMAICANS, MAN...
BUY THE COKE AND
COOK IT UP IN MY
MA'S OLD LASAGNA
PAN.



WHAT JAMAICANS,
EXACTLY?

IT'S A POSSE FROM
CHICAGO, MAN... THEY
COME DOWN ONCE
A MONTH, SET UP IN A
MOTEL, SELL THE
STUFF TO GUYS
LIKE ME, FROM ALL
AROUND HERE...



THERE'S A MEET TOMORROW
NIGHT... LET ME GO AND
I'LL TELL YOU WHERE...



NEXT WEEK:
TWEEN A ROCK
AND A HARD
PLACE.